



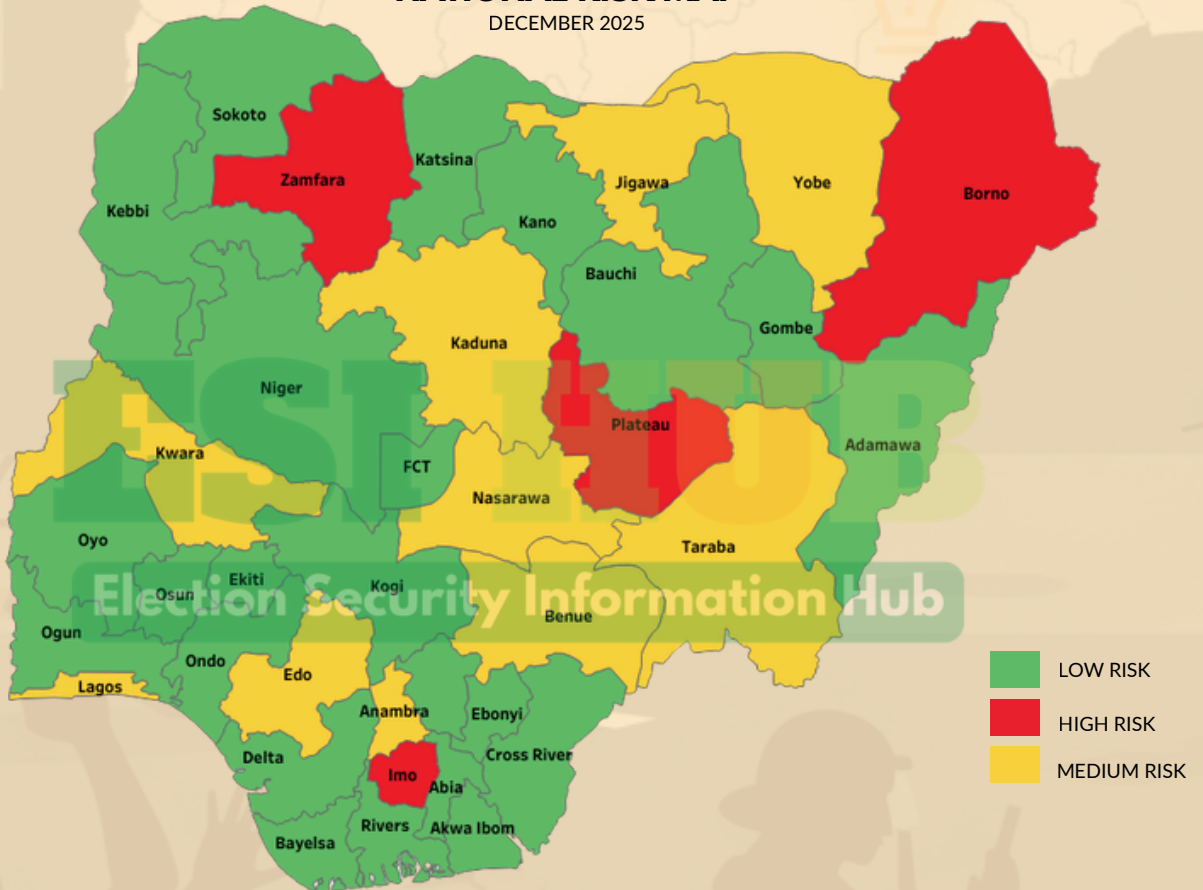
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# MONTHLY THREAT ANALYSIS REPORT – DECEMBER 2025

## NATIONAL RISK MAP

DECEMBER 2025



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## ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The Kukah Centre (TKC), founded by Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah, is a non-profit policy and research institution dedicated to promoting democracy, good governance, and national cohesion in Nigeria. Through evidence-based research, data-driven analysis, and inclusive dialogue, the Centre works to strengthen human-rights protection, accountability, and sustainable peace. Its interventions are designed to generate actionable insights that inform governance reforms, deepen civic participation, and reinforce institutional resilience.

As the Secretariat of the National Peace Committee (NPC), The Kukah Centre provides administrative support to the NPC — a non-governmental, non-partisan body of eminent Nigerians that has been central to Nigeria’s democratic stability since its establishment in 2015. The Committee is widely recognized for facilitating the National Peace Accords, through which political parties and candidates commit to issue-based campaigns and respect for electoral outcomes. Beyond the accords, the NPC engages in preventive diplomacy, mediation, and dialogue, consistently helping to de-escalate political tensions and safeguard democratic transitions across electoral cycles.

In alignment with this peacebuilding mandate, The Kukah Centre accepted to host the Election Security Information (ESI) Hub under the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN II) programme. The ESI Hub functions as a central coordination and data-intelligence platform that tracks electoral offences, identifies insecurity flashpoints, and generates verified, real-time analysis to inform decision-making. By integrating systematic data collection, geospatial analysis, and strategic communication tools, the Hub provides actionable insights to key stakeholders, including INEC, security agencies, civil society organizations, media, and development partners. Thereby enhancing early warning, countering disinformation, and advancing the shared goal of peaceful, credible, and inclusive elections in Nigeria.

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This December 2025 Monthly Threat Analysis Report provides a systematic assessment of Nigeria's security landscape during the final month of the year, serving as a critical baseline for understanding the environment ahead of the 2026 electoral cycle. The analysis covers 112 verified security incidents recorded across 31 states and the Federal Capital Territory, resulting in 151 deaths, 117 injuries, and 101 kidnappings.

Produced by The Kukah Centre's Election Security Information (ESI) Hub under the EU-SDGN II programme, this assessment is designed to strengthen early warning, support evidence-based planning, and guide preventive interventions during a critical end-of-year period preceding intensified electoral activity. The report applies internationally recognized methodologies—aligned with INEC, UNOCHA, ACLED, and OECD-DAC standards—to transform verified incident data into actionable strategic insight.

By integrating systematic incident tracking with geospatial analysis and contextual field intelligence, the report supports the objectives of the EU-SDGN II programme and the mandate of the National Peace Committee (NPC). Its core purpose is to equip stakeholders—including INEC, security agencies, civil society, media, and development partners—with the evidence base needed for preventive action, logistical planning, and targeted peacebuilding interventions as Nigeria transitions into a heightened pre-election period.

### Key Findings at a Glance

#### Verification Summary

December 2025

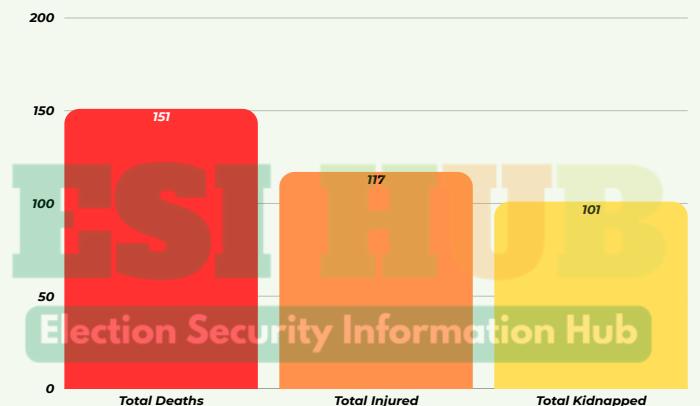
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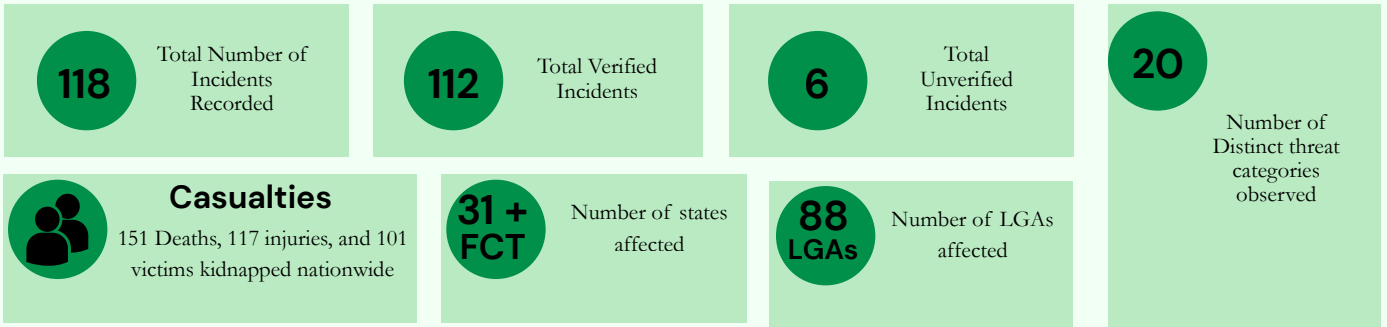
Verified  
94.9%

#### Human Impact

December 2025



December 2025 closed with a volatile and fragmented security environment, marked by the convergence of kidnapping, organised armed violence, communal clashes, and urban criminality. The threat landscape in December reflected diffuse, multi-directional insecurity, rather than a single dominant threat driver.

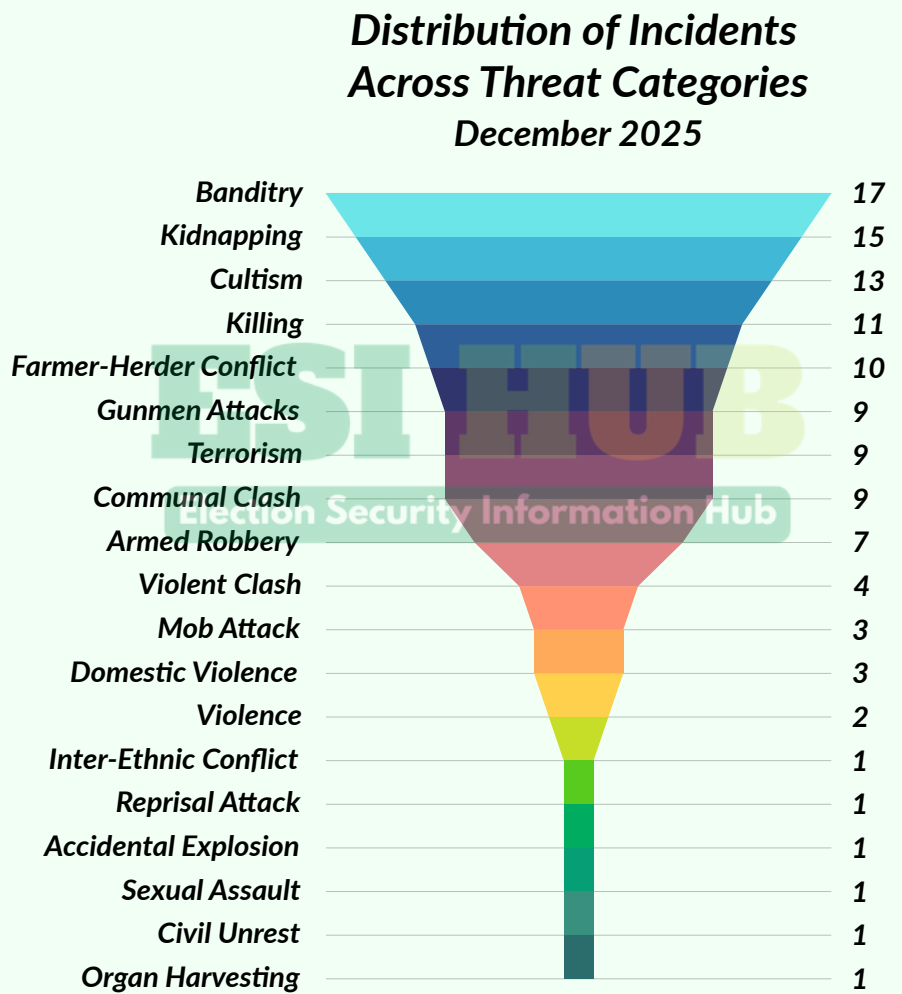


**Geographic Spread:** Incidents recorded across multiple geopolitical zones, affecting both rural and urban LGAs

These figures represent minimum confirmed values, as several incidents reported unspecified numbers of fatalities, injuries, or kidnapped victims.

**Top Threats**

Kidnapping remained a significant threat, particularly along inter-state corridors and rural communities, sustaining pressure on civilian mobility and public confidence. Banditry and armed attacks continued to drive fatal outcomes, while communal violence and cult-related clashes contributed to persistent localised instability, especially in peri-urban and urban centres. The end-of-year festive period amplified civilian exposure due to increased travel, public gatherings, and reduced institutional presence in some areas.

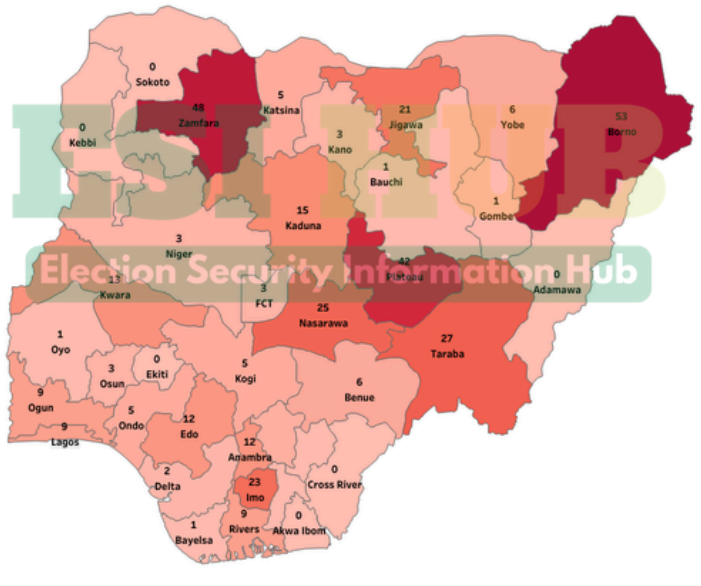


## Geographic Highlights

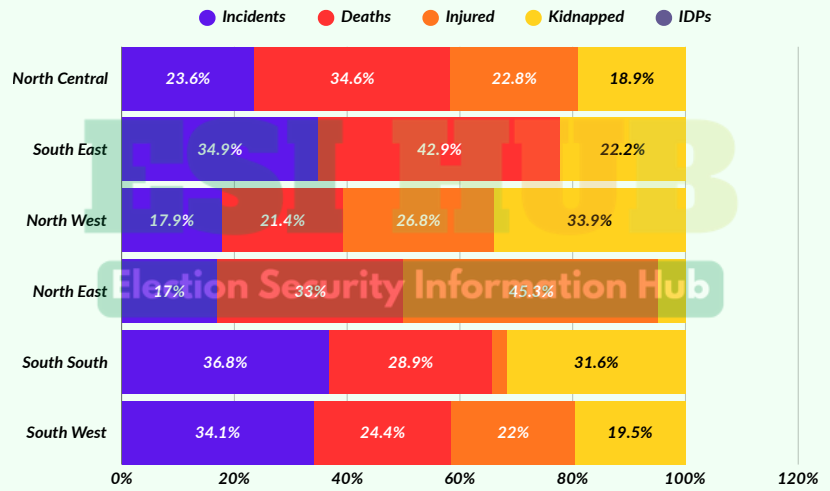
Threats remained geographically concentrated but with spillover effects

Geopolitical Zone	Description
North Central	Continued to experience high-lethality incidents linked to communal clashes and armed attacks, reinforcing its status as a persistent fatality hotspot
North West	Remained vulnerable to kidnapping and banditry, particularly along transit routes and rural settlements, sustaining elevated risks to movement and logistics.
North East	Persistent insecurity is marked by low-intensity insurgent activity and recurring farmer-herder and communal violence. While overall incidents have decreased, episodic high-casualty attacks continue to pose risks to civilian safety and electoral logistics.
South West	Exhibited a hybrid threat profile, combining urban cult violence and criminality with sporadic kidnapping and armed incursions in forested areas.
South South	Recorded lower-intensity but persistent cultism and targeted criminal violence, posing risks to urban political mobilisation.
South East	Characterised by simmering tensions involving criminal gangs and targeted attacks, with implications for public order and political activities.

## Total Casualties Across Nigeria DECEMBER 2025



## Region Level Summary December 2025



# Immediate Security and Electoral Implications

01

### Heightened Pre-Election Risk Baseline:

The diffuse insecurity observed in December establishes an unstable foundation for early 2026 electoral preparations.

02

### Civilian Mobility Constraints:

Kidnapping and armed road attacks continue to restrict movement, with implications for voter registration, campaigning, and logistics.

03

### Urban Political Exposure:

Cultism and targeted violence in cities pose risks to political gatherings and grassroots mobilisation.

04

### Underreported Human Impact:

Incidents with unspecified casualty figures suggest potential underestimation of deaths, injuries, and kidnapped victims.

05

### Festive-Period Vulnerabilities:

Reduced institutional presence during holidays created exploitable security gaps likely to persist into the new year.

## RECOMMENDATIONS PREVIEW

### Security Agencies:

- Intensify intelligence-led patrols along known kidnapping corridors and communal flashpoints during the pre-election build-up.

### National Peace Committee & Political Actors:

- Proactively engage local peace structures in identified hotspots to de-escalate tensions ahead of formal campaign periods.

### INEC:

- Integrate December 2025 incident patterns into early logistics planning and route risk assessments.

### Civil Society & Media:

- Strengthen monitoring of low-intensity but persistent threats that may escalate during political mobilisation.

### International Partners:

- Support early-warning systems, subnational peace infrastructure, and preventive deployment planning.

ESI HUB  
Election Security Information Hub

## 2. INTRODUCTION

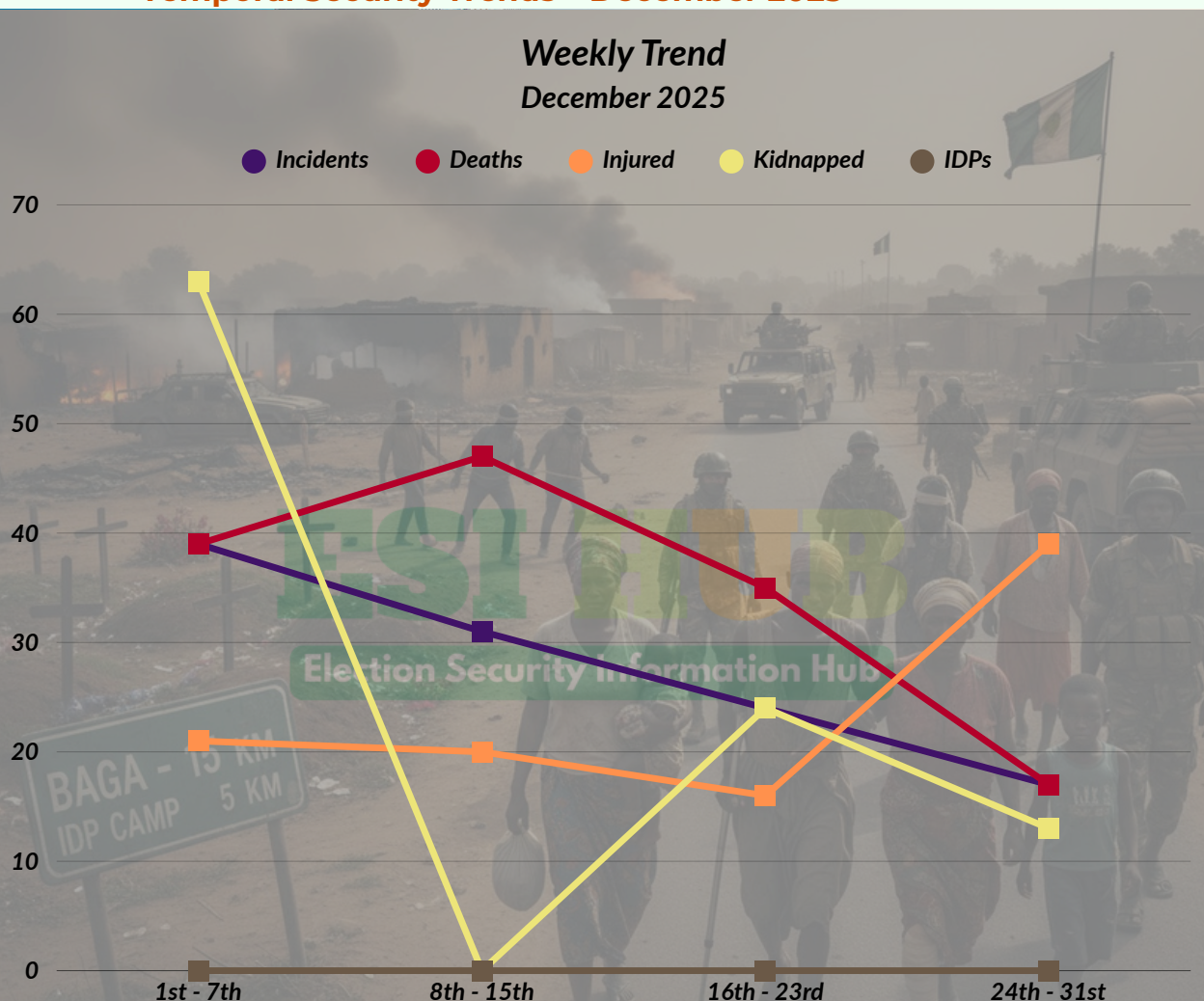
### 2.1. PURPOSE & MANDATE

This report is produced under the mandate of the Election Security Information (ESI) Hub, supported by The Kukah Centre, and aligned with the objectives of the EU-SDGN II project and the National Peace Committee (NPC). Its purpose is to systematically monitor, analyse, and report on the interaction between insecurity and electoral integrity in Nigeria. For December 2025, the report provides an evidence-based assessment of the national threat environment at the close of the year, identifying risks likely to shape the early 2026 pre-election period.

During December 2025, the national security environment was characterised by persistent criminal violence with episodic spikes, rather than the mass-abduction surge observed in January 2026. While kidnapping remained a notable threat, lethal attacks and mixed-threat incidents dominated the period, particularly in the first half of the month and around major religious and cultural events.

Overall activity peaked early, reflecting heightened risk associated with the festive season, increased population movement, and symbolic targets. Although incident frequency declined toward the end of the month, fatality levels remained concerning, indicating sustained operational capacity among violent actors.

### Temporal Security Trends – December 2025



### **Week 49 (1–7 December)**

The month opened with a high operational tempo, recording 39 incidents, 39 deaths, 21 injuries, and 63 kidnapped victims. This period coincided with the onset of festive-season security alerts, suggesting opportunistic violence exploiting increased civilian movement and reduced vigilance.

### **Week 50 (8–14 December)**

Although incident volume declined to 31 incidents, this week recorded the highest death toll of the month (47 deaths). A notable fatality peak on 8 December indicates a shift toward high-impact, lethal attacks, even as overall activity moderated.

### **Week 51 (15–21 December)**

Security activity continued to taper, with 24 incidents, 35 deaths, and 24 kidnapped victims. The launch of the “Motherland 2025” cultural festival during this period did not trigger large-scale disruption, but background insecurity persisted across multiple states.

### **Week 52 (22–28 December)**

This week recorded 17 incidents, 17 deaths, but a spike in injuries (39), suggesting crowd-related violence, attacks in populated areas, or less-lethal confrontations. Christmas Eve incidents, including a mosque bombing in Maiduguri, underscored the continued symbolic targeting of religious spaces.

### **Year Transition (29–31 December)**

The final days of the year saw low but steady activity, with heightened preventive deployments around Christmas and New Year crossover services. Notably, 25 December recorded a U.S. airstrike in Sokoto targeting ISIS/Lakurawa elements, reflecting continued counter-terrorism pressure.

Collectively, December 2025 reflects a stabilisation phase with embedded volatility. Violence was front-loaded, with early-month surges and mid-month lethality, followed by a controlled but fragile decline toward year-end.

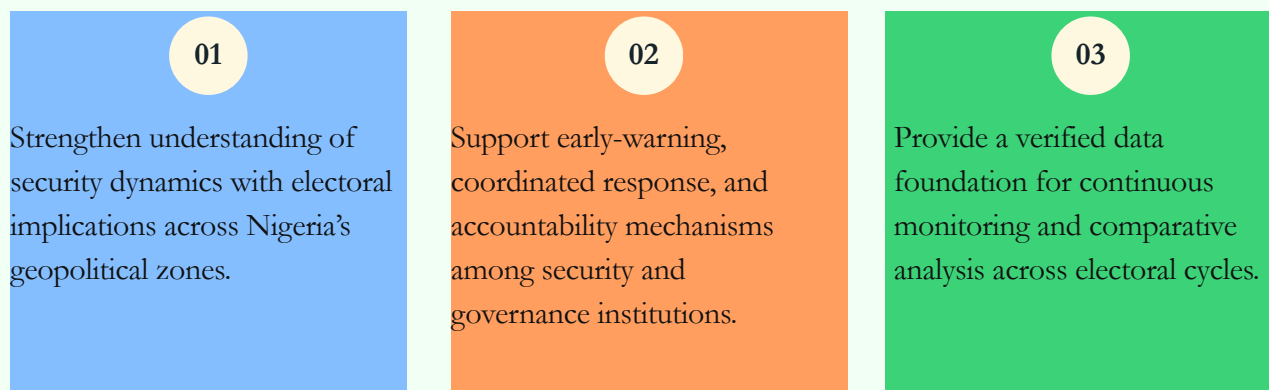
From an electoral risk perspective, December serves as a baseline warning period: armed actors demonstrated readiness to exploit symbolic dates, public gatherings, and mobility peaks. Without targeted early intervention, these dynamics seemingly provide an operational foundation for the mass-abduction escalation in January 2026.

## **2.2. CONTEXT & REPORTING RATIONALE**

The month of December 2025 represents a critical transition point. While not yet defined by mass-scale electoral violence, the month revealed entrenched insecurity patterns that risk being instrumentalised as political activity intensifies. The persistence of kidnapping, lethal armed attacks, and communal violence highlights the potential for escalation if left unaddressed. This report is therefore essential for preventive action, offering strategic foresight rather than reactive assessment.

## 2.3. AIM OF THE REPORT

This assessment report analyses both election-related incidents and broader insecurity trends with potential electoral implications. It situates these dynamics within Nigeria's wider governance and democratic landscape, examining how armed violence, disinformation, and institutional weaknesses intersect to threaten political stability. The assessment aims to:



## 2.4. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK & KEY QUESTIONS

This report is structured around seven core analytical questions that guide the evidence collection, analysis, and recommendations. These questions ensure a systematic examination of the nexus between national security and electoral integrity, moving from situational assessment through to forward-looking risk mitigation.

The core questions addressed are:

1. What is the current state of national security in Nigeria, and how has it evolved?
2. How is insecurity impacting electoral processes and preparations?
3. What electoral offences are being committed, and by whom?
4. What are the underlying drivers of insecurity and electoral violence?
5. Which areas and stakeholders are most at risk?
6. What can be done to mitigate risks and strengthen electoral integrity?
7. What are the plausible future scenarios for the electoral process?

The answers to these questions form the logical progression of the report, from data and diagnosis to foresight and actionable response.

## 2.5. REPORT STRUCTURE

Following this introduction and the analytical framework outlined in Section 2.4, the report is structured to move from methodology to findings, analysis, and actionable guidance. **Section 3** details the rigorous multi-source methodology and data verification protocols employed. **Section 4** provides a quantitative and qualitative overview of the national security landscape. **Section 5** offers a geopolitical zone-by-zone analysis, contextualizing national trends. **Section 6** tracks and analyses electoral offences specifically. **Section 7** delves into the structural and immediate drivers of conflict and emerging dynamics. **Section 8** presents a forward-looking risk assessment and scenario planning matrix. **Section 9** provides targeted, stakeholder-specific recommendations. **Section 10** provides the conclusion to the report.

### 3. METHODOLOGY & DATA SOURCES

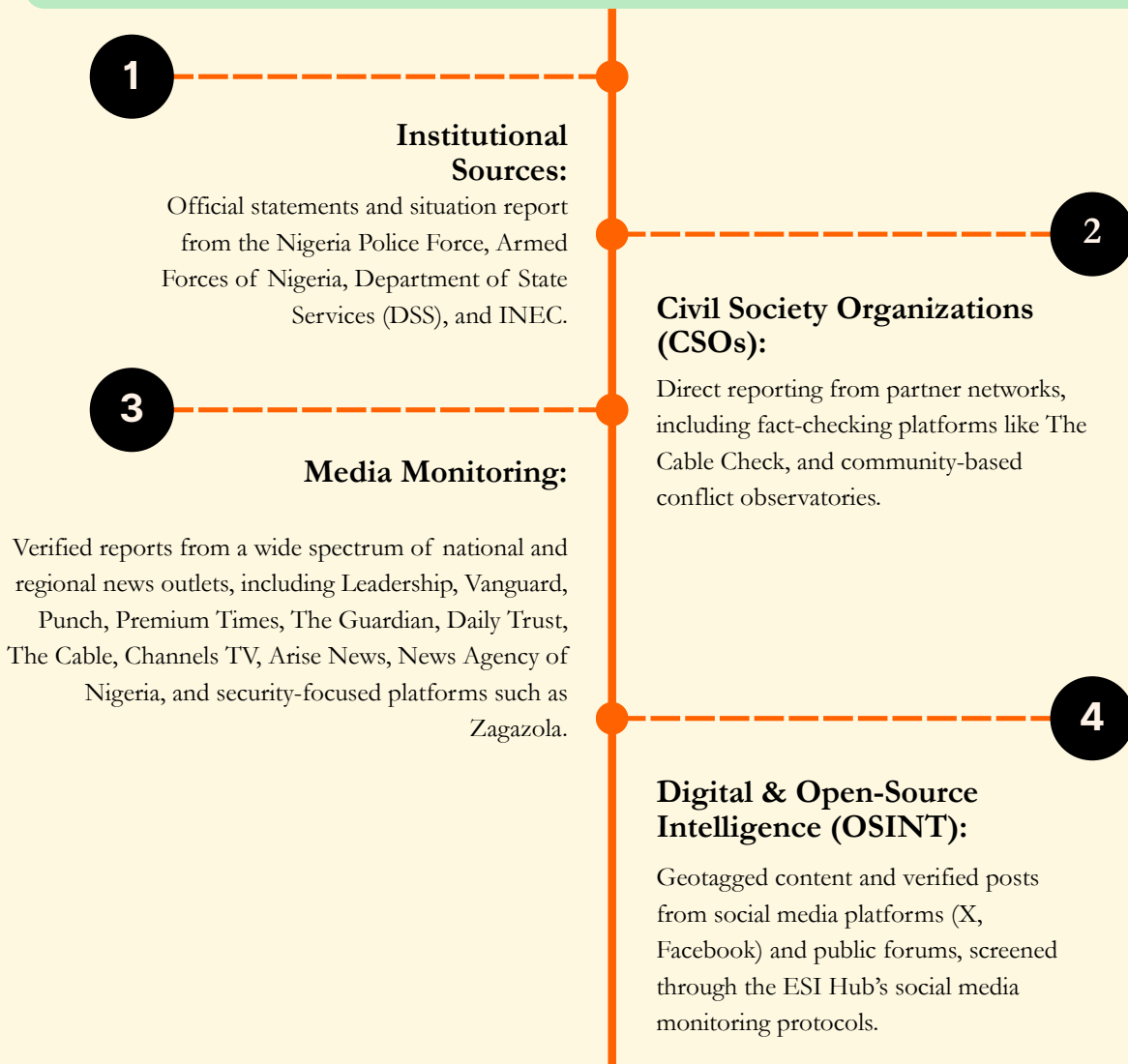
This report is produced by the Election Security Information (ESI) Hub, applying a structured methodology that integrates multi-source data ingestion, rigorous verification aligned with international best practices, and a combined quantitative and qualitative analytical approach. The framework, which includes the Electoral Offences Tracking System (EOTS) and geospatial analysis through the ESI Studio, generates verified data to inform early warning systems, support institutional accountability, and guide evidence-based peacebuilding initiatives. By merging systematic incident tracking with contextual insights from the National Peace Committee’s Independent State Peace Architectures (ISPAs), civil society partners, and media monitors, this report aims to strengthen a coordinated national framework for election security analysis.

#### 3.1 Methodology

The assessment follows a six-step hybrid methodology derived from the ESI Hub Operational Framework, designed to align with international standards, including the UNOCHA Verification Scale, ACLED event coding protocols, and EU early-warning benchmarks.

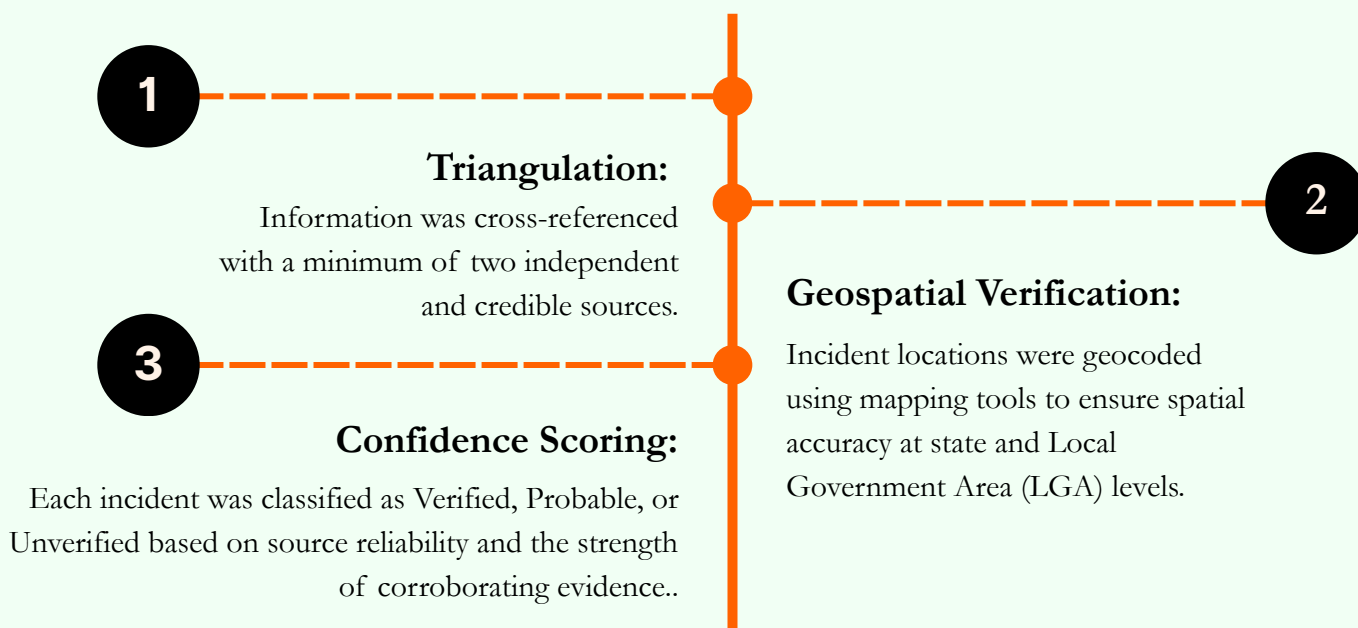
#### Step 1 – Multi-Source Ingestion

Incident data was gathered from a diverse network of over 50 open-source and institutional feeds, comprising:



## Step 2 – Data Verification and Validation

Each incident underwent a three-stage protocol:



## Step 3 – UNOCHA Verification Scale Mapping

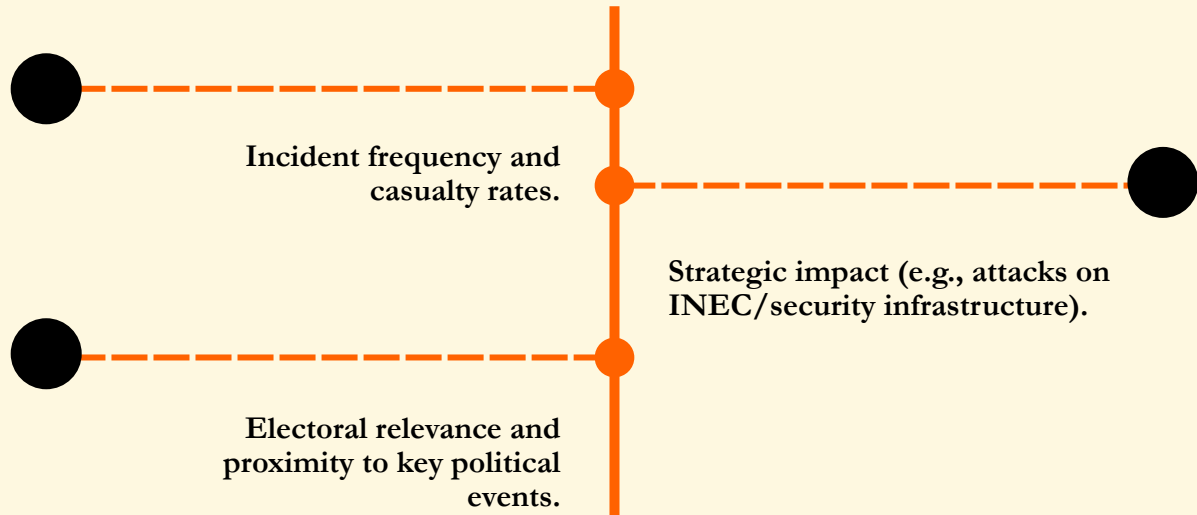
A confidence score was assigned to every incident using the UNOCHA Verification Scale. Only incidents attaining a score of Level 4 (Highly Probable) or above are incorporated into the core dataset for trend analysis.

## Step 4 – ACLED-Style Coding & Categorization

Verified incidents were systematically coded using an adapted version of the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) taxonomy to ensure comparability. This includes classifying each incident by Event Type, identifying the Actors involved, and logging its Geographic Precision (State, LGA, Town).

## Step 5 – Quantitative Weighting: Flashpoint Severity Index (FSI)

The proprietary Flashpoint Severity Index (FSI) was used to compute severity scores and standardise the impact assessment across states and LGAs. The FSI algorithm weights:



This generates High, Medium, and Low-risk classifications for states and LGAs.

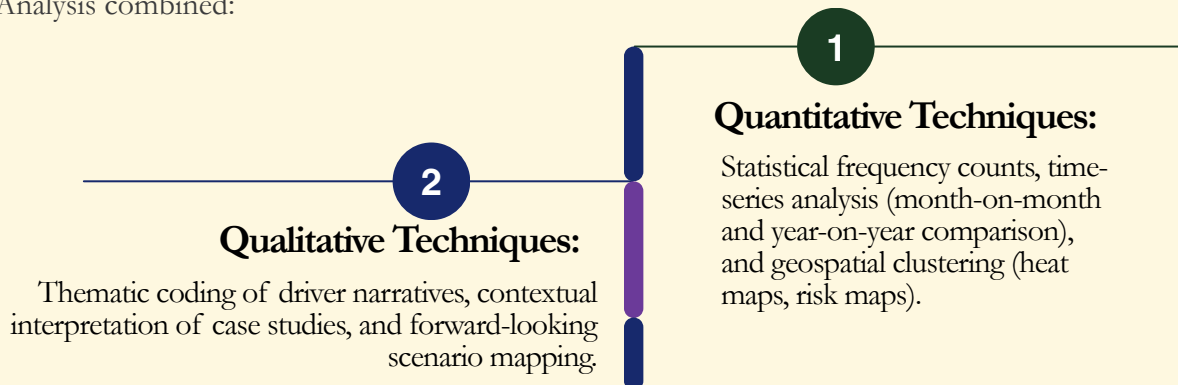
## Step 6 – Qualitative Context Review & Synthesis

Analysts conducted a qualitative review to contextualise the quantitative data, correlating incident patterns with broader socio-political and economic dynamics. This step integrates field-level insights from ISPA networks and partner organisations to identify emerging trends and the underlying drivers of conflict.

### 3.2 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

Following verification, data were cleaned, standardised, and consolidated using the ESI Hub’s relational database schema. Duplicate entries and unverifiable reports (Level 0-2) were excluded.

Analysis combined:

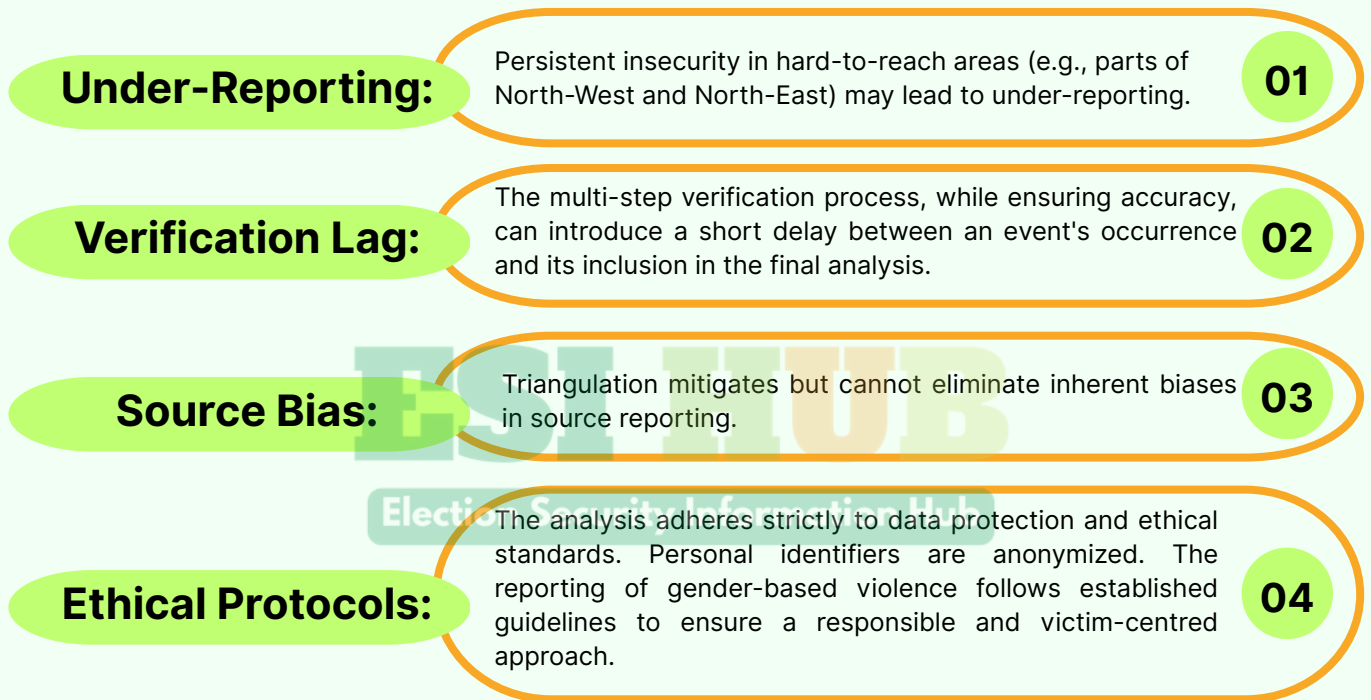


Findings were visualized through charts and infographics to aid trend interpretation and stakeholder communication.

### 3.3 TIME FRAME AND SCOPE

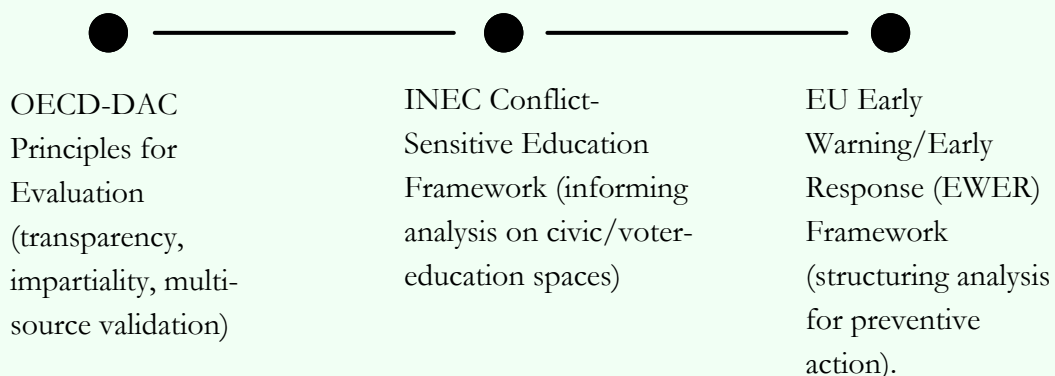
This assessment covers the period **1–31 December 2025**. It includes all verified incidents of insecurity recorded during this period across Nigeria's 31 states and the FCT. The analysis focuses exclusively on events occurring within this reporting window.

### 3.4 LIMITATIONS & ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS



### 3.5 ALIGNMENT WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

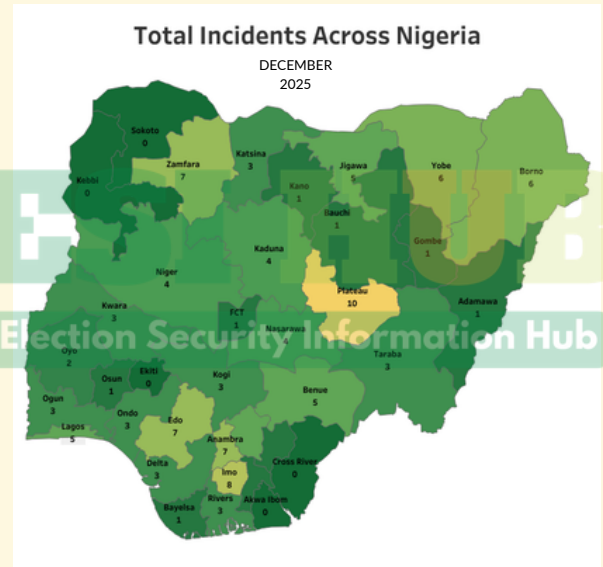
The methodology is explicitly designed to align with:



## 4. NATIONAL SECURITY OVERVIEW

### 4.1 QUANTITATIVE SNAPSHOT

December 2025 closed with a complex national security landscape characterised by the persistence of organised violence, widespread criminality, and localised breakdowns in social order. While no uniform nationwide escalation was observed across all threat types, the cumulative effect of violent incidents during the period sustained a heightened atmosphere of insecurity with implications for public safety, mobility, and pre-election preparedness.



Security incidents recorded during the month spanned multiple geopolitical zones, affecting both rural and urban LGAs. Organised armed actors remained active, particularly in parts of the North Central, North West, and North East, while kidnapping, communal violence, cult-related clashes, and opportunistic crimes were recorded across southern and central states. The festive period contributed to increased civilian exposure due to interstate travel, public gatherings, and reduced institutional presence.

Aggregate figures for deaths, injuries, and kidnapped victims are based strictly on confirmed numeric values reported in incident records. Incidents where casualties or kidnapped victims were described using non-specific terms or where figures were not verified were included in incident counts but excluded from numerical totals. Consequently, all human impact figures for December 2025 represent minimum confirmed values, with actual figures likely higher.

### Quantitative Snapshot

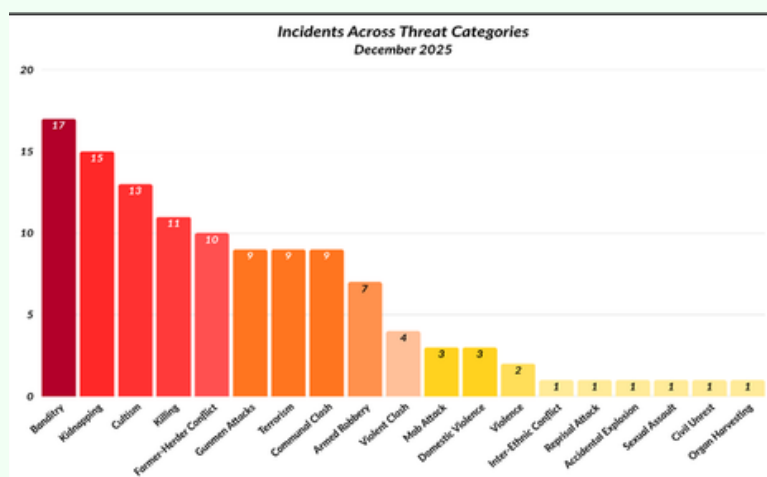
In December 2025, 118 total security incidents were recorded, of which 112 were verified. The confirmed human impact included 151 fatalities, 117 injuries, and 101 kidnapped victims. These figures represent minimum confirmed counts, as several incidents reported unspecified numbers.

Most Affected States (Incidents): Plateau (10), Imo (8), Zamfara (7), Edo (7), Anambra (7).

Most Affected States (Deaths): Niger (54), Plateau (28), Benue (27), with concentrated fatalities reported in specific LGAs.

Most Affected States (Kidnapping – Victims): Kaduna (176), Zamfara (81), Katsina (53).

## 4.2 THREAT CATEGORY ANALYSIS



Security incidents recorded in December 2025 were categorised into 6 analytical clusters to reflect dominant threat patterns observed during the final month of the year. The clustering framework captures the interaction between organised armed activity, criminal economies, communal tensions, social disorder, and interpersonal violence, while accounting for end-of-year mobility, dry-season pressures, and pre-election risk conditioning.

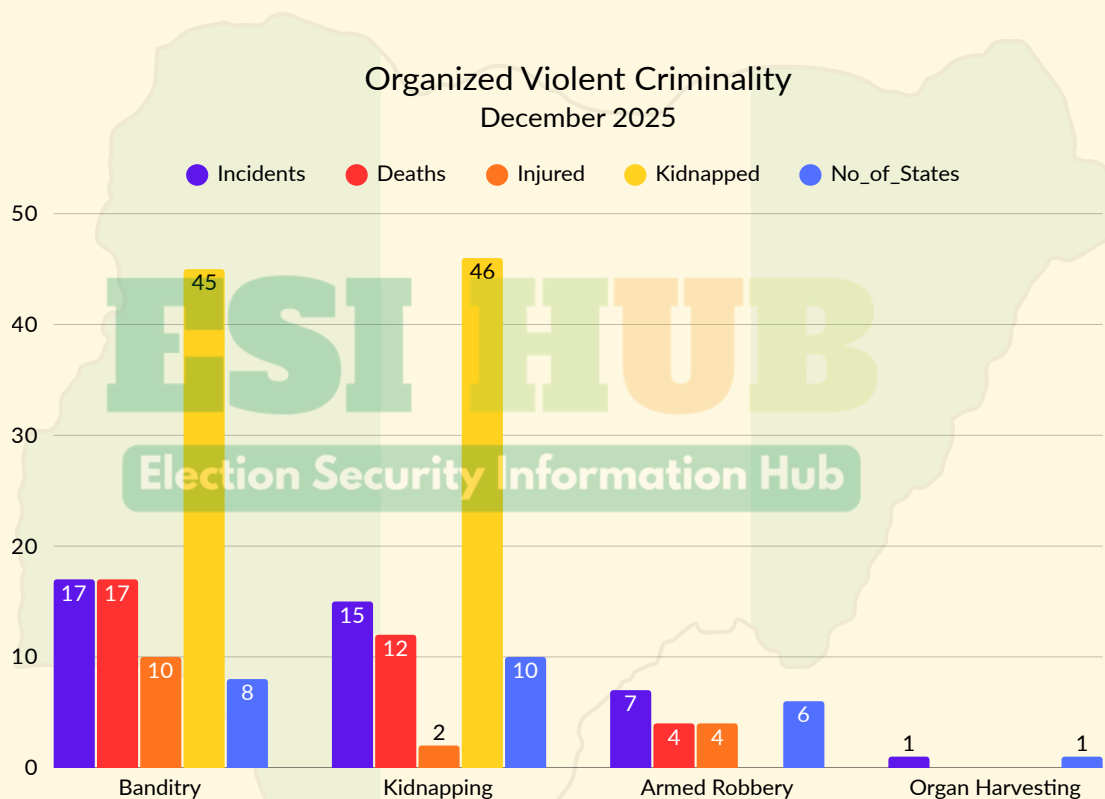
Table 1: Analytical Clusters for January 2026

Analytical Cluster (General Theme)	Threat Categories Included	Analytical Rationale
Organised Violent Criminality	Banditry; Kidnapping; Armed Robbery; Organ Harvesting	These threats are primarily profit-driven, organised, and often involve networks, logistics, and sustained criminal enterprises rather than spontaneous violence. They tend to target civilians, economic assets, and mobility routes.
Political & Insurgent Violence	Terrorism; Gunmen Attacks; Reprisal Attack	These threats are linked to ideological, insurgent, or retaliatory motivations, often aimed at state authority, communities, or symbolic targets. They shape broader insecurity beyond isolated incidents.
Communal & Identity-Based Conflict	Communal Clash; Inter-Ethnic Conflict; Farmer-Herder Conflict	These threats emerge from competition over resources, identity tensions, and historical grievances, often recurring in specific flashpoint zones with cycles of violence.
Localized Armed Violence	Killing; Violent Clash; Mob Attack	These represent spontaneous or semi-organized local violence, often triggered by disputes, vigilante action, or community breakdown rather than structured criminal networks.
Cult-Related Violence	Cultism	Distinct pattern of violence driven by gang/cult rivalries, territorial control, and recruitment dynamics, particularly in urban and peri-urban spaces.

Gender-Based & Interpersonal Violence	Domestic Violence; Sexual Assault	These threats are primarily private-sphere violence, rooted in power imbalances, social norms, and gender vulnerability rather than communal or political dynamics.
Public Disorder & Protest-Related Violence	Civil Unrest; Violence	Distinct pattern of violence driven by gang/cult rivalries, territorial control, and recruitment dynamics, particularly in urban and peri-urban spaces.
Accidental & Unintended Harm	Accidental Explosion	This is analytically distinct because harm is not intentional, often linked to weapons mishandling, mining, or explosive remnants of war.

The following analysis categorises the 118 recorded security incidents from December 2025 into six analytical clusters. This structured overview evaluates the implications of these threats on national security and the upcoming electoral cycle.

## 1. ORGANISED VIOLENCE & INSURGENCY



**Threats:** Banditry, Kidnapping, Armed Robbery, Organ Harvesting

**Narrative Overview:** Organised violent criminality remained a dominant security concern in December 2025, driven primarily by profit-motivated armed networks rather than ideological insurgency. These groups demonstrated mobility across state boundaries, operational coordination, and a consistent pattern of targeting transport corridors, rural settlements, and peri-urban communities.

Banditry was most visible in the North West and North Central, particularly in parts of Zamfara<sup>[1]</sup>, Niger<sup>[2]</sup>, Kaduna, and Plateau, where armed groups attacked villages, travellers, and grazing routes. The use of explosive devices along road networks in Zamfara signalled a tactical escalation aimed at disrupting mobility and deterring security patrols.

Kidnapping persisted as a core revenue source for criminal groups, with incidents recorded across the South West, South East, South South, and North Central, including Ogun<sup>[3]</sup>, Anambra, Kogi, Imo<sup>[4]</sup>, Rivers, Edo<sup>[5]</sup> and Plateau. Abductions commonly occurred along highways and in semi-rural communities, indicating a sustained threat to civilian movement and economic activity.

Armed robbery incidents were reported in urban and semi-urban areas in Delta<sup>[6]</sup>, Edo, Anambra, Nasarawa, and Ondo<sup>[7]</sup>, reflecting the nationwide spread of violent acquisitive crime. These incidents were largely opportunistic but still involved lethal force in several cases.

Isolated allegations of organ harvesting in Imo<sup>[8]</sup> and Edo<sup>[9]</sup> highlighted an emerging and concerning dimension of criminality that intersects with kidnapping and human trafficking risks, though the scale remained limited relative to banditry and abductions.

Overall, December patterns indicate that organised violent criminality was primarily economically motivated, territorially adaptive, and increasingly embedded along weakly policed rural corridors and inter-state transit routes.

## SECURITY & ELECTORAL IMPLICATIONS

### Security Implications:

The entrenchment of organised violent criminal networks presents a structural challenge to internal security. Their ability to operate across state boundaries complicates policing and intelligence coordination. Attacks along highways, rural roads, and grazing reserves) undermine civilian mobility, disrupt trade, and erode public confidence in state protection.

<sup>[1]</sup> Linda Ikeji Blog. (2025, December 11). Four passengers feared dead as IED planted by bandits hits vehicle in Zamfara. <https://www.lindaikojisblog.com/2025/12/four-passengers-feared-d3ad-as-ied-planted-by-bandits-hits-vehicle-in-zamfara.html>

<sup>[2]</sup> Zagazola. (2025, December 1). Niger: Veiled bandits attack Tudun-Fulani, shoot woman in failed abduction attempt. Daily Post. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/12/01/niger-veiled-bandits-attack-tudun-fulani-shoot-woman-in-failed-abduction-attempt/>

<sup>[3]</sup> The Punch Newspaper. (2025, December 1). Gunmen abduct six real estate marketers in Ogun Police. <https://punchng.com/gunmen-abduct-six-real-estate-marketers-in-ogun-police/>

<sup>[4]</sup> Instagram. (2025, December 2). Passengers kidnapped at Ngor Okpala in Imo State while travelling from Owerri to Aba [Instagram Reel]. <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DRwiY7MDGXV/?igsh=MXN2eWR6e2Q5YXp2Nw%3D%3D>

<sup>[5]</sup> Daily Post Newspaper. (2025, December 15). Gunmen kidnap 18 travellers, 11 rescued. <https://dailytrust.com/gunmen-kidnap-18-travellers-11-rescued/>

<sup>[6]</sup> Instagram. (2025, December 4). CCTV captures thieves storm Asaba electrical shop, tie up security guard and cart away goods worth over N50m [Instagram Reel]. <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DRz6BBYDOve/?igsh=OHRka112OXVteXJ3>

<sup>[7]</sup> The Vanguard Newspaper. (2025, December 21). Suspected robbers shot two policemen, one female bystander in Ondo. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/12/suspected-robbers-shot-two-policemen-one-female-bystander-in-ondo/>

<sup>[8]</sup> The Vanguard Newspaper. (2025, December 8). Imo govt seals hotel, mortuary over alleged kidnapping, organ harvesting. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/12/imo-govt-seals-hotel-mortuary-over-alleged-kidnapping-organ-harvesting-2/>

<sup>[9]</sup> The Guardian Newspaper. (2025, December 14). Police arrest mortuary attendant over alleged organ harvesting in Edo. <https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria/metro/police-arrest-mortuary-attendant-over-alleged-organ-harvesting-in-edo/>

The involvement of armed groups in kidnapping and banditry also incentivises the growth of vigilante formations, which risks further fragmentation of local security governance and potential human rights abuses.

The emerging organ-harvesting cases raise additional public safety concerns, suggesting the presence of clandestine criminal infrastructures that extend beyond traditional banditry and robbery.

### Electoral Implications:

Organised violent criminality poses a direct threat to electoral participation and logistics. Persistent highway insecurity could restrict the movement of voters, party agents, and election officials, particularly in rural and peri-urban LGAs.

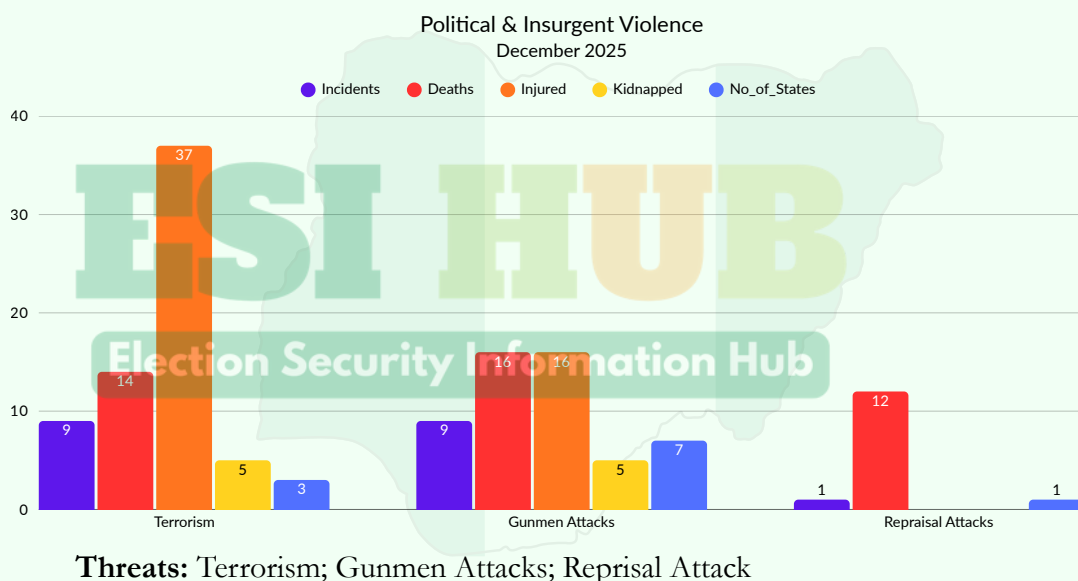
Fear of abduction may suppress voter turnout and limit campaign activities in high-risk corridors such as Ogun, Kogi, Imo, Rivers, and Plateau. In affected LGAs, electoral material deployment may require heavy security escorts, increasing operational costs and the risk of last-mile disruptions.

Where criminal groups exert territorial influence, there is a risk of coercive control over local political processes, including voter intimidation or ballot interference at ward levels.

### Geographical Implications:

- Core Hotspots: North West (Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina) and North Central (Niger, Plateau, Kogi)
- Transit Corridors at Risk: Inter-state highways linking South West–North Central and South East–South South
- Urban & Peri-urban Nodes: Ogun, Imo, Rivers, Edo, Delta, Ondo, Anambra
- Emerging Concern: Organ-harvesting allegations concentrated in Imo and Edo
- Pattern: Attacks clustered along weakly policed rural roads, forest belts, and grazing reserves

## 2. Political & Insurgent Violence



**Narrative Overview:** Political and insurgent violence persisted in December 2025, reflecting a mix of ideologically driven terrorism, targeted armed attacks on state agents, and retaliatory community violence. Incidents were concentrated in the North East, with episodic spillovers into the North Central, North West, and South East.

In the North East, attacks attributed to Boko Haram and ISWAP continued to target both security personnel and civilian communities, particularly in Borno and Yobe States. Notable incidents included an attack in Konduga LGA<sup>[10]</sup>, an assault on a resettlement community in Delwa<sup>[11]</sup>, and a mosque bombing in Maiduguri's Gaborun Market that resulted in significant civilian casualties<sup>[12]</sup>. These events illustrate the enduring operational capability of insurgent groups and their willingness to strike symbolic, civilian, and security-linked targets.

Beyond the North East, gunmen attacks against state authority and civilians were recorded in Nasarawa<sup>[13]</sup>, Jigawa<sup>[14]</sup>, and Enugu<sup>[15]</sup>, indicating that politically inflected armed violence is not geographically contained. A high-casualty reprisal-style attack against illegal miners in Barkin Ladi, Plateau State<sup>[16]</sup> further highlights how local grievances can escalate into lethal violence under conditions of weak governance and poor conflict management.

Overall, the December pattern suggests that political and insurgent violence remained persistent, spatially dispersed, and tactically varied, combining terrorism, targeted killings, and retaliatory assaults rather than a single uniform threat profile.

## SECURITY & ELECTORAL IMPLICATIONS

### Security Implications:

The continued presence of insurgent groups in the North East places sustained pressure on military and policing resources, particularly in Konduga, Biu, Maiduguri, and parts of Yobe. Recurrent attacks against security facilities and personnel risk degrading morale, stretching response capacity, and incentivising heavier securitisation of affected communities.

The occurrence of reprisals and community-targeted violence, as seen in Plateau, signals a fragile local security environment where state presence is insufficient to prevent cycles of retaliation. This increases the likelihood of vigilante mobilisation and further fragmentation of local order.

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<sup>[10]</sup> Zagazola. (2025, December 1). Police repel Boko Haram attack in Konduga, launch manhunt for abductors. Daily Post. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/12/01/police-repel-boko-haram-attack-hunt-abductors-in-borno/>

<sup>[11]</sup> Zagazola. (2025, December 11). Troops repel attack on Delwa resettlement community, neutralise terrorist in Borno. Akelicious. <https://www.akelicious.net/troops-repel-boko-haram-attack-on-delwa-resettlement-community-in-borno/>

<sup>[12]</sup> Zagazola. (2025, December 24). Bomb explodes inside mosque in Maiduguri market, worshippers killed. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c0je3v3en01o>

<sup>[13]</sup> Zagazola. (2025, December 15). Gunmen kill police inspector, two others in Nasarawa, cart away rifle. The Cable. <https://www.thecable.ng/gunmen-ambush-police-patrol-kill-officer-two-residents-in-nasarawa/>

<sup>[14]</sup> Daily Post. (2025, December 2). Police confirm officer's death, attack on DPO's residence in Jigawa. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/12/02/police-confirm-officers-death-attack-on-dpos-residence-in-jigawa/>

<sup>[15]</sup> The Guardian Newspaper. (2025, December 28). Gunmen kill policemen in Enugu, set patrol van on fire. <https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria/metro/gunmen-kill-policemen-in-enugu-set-patrol-van-on-fire/>

<sup>[16]</sup> Zagazola. (2025, December 20). Gunmen kill 12 illegal miners in Tosho Community, Plateau. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fjBRoRyKr-c>

## Electoral Implications

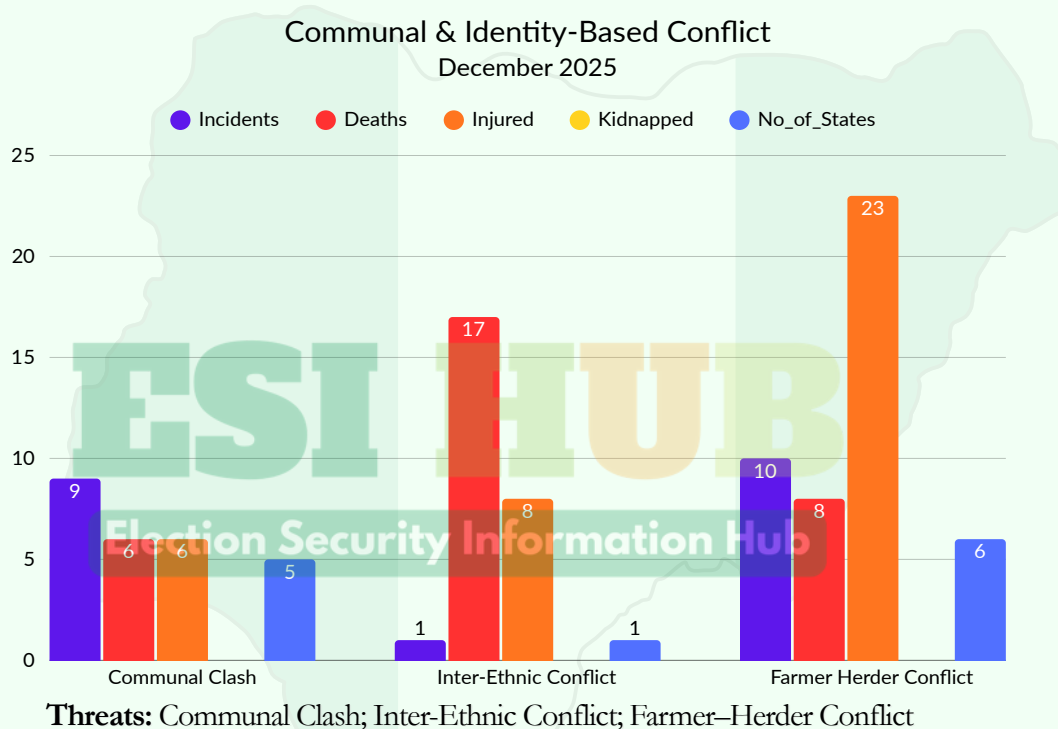
In insurgency-affected LGAs of Borno and Yobe, insecurity could constrain voter mobility, limit campaign outreach, and complicate the deployment of electoral materials and personnel. High-profile attacks near population centres are likely to amplify fear, depressing turnout in vulnerable wards.

Targeted violence against political and traditional figures, such as the abduction of an LG vice chairman in Biu raises the risk of political intimidation, leadership vacuum, and reduced local civic engagement. In mixed or contested communities, incidents like those in Nasarawa and Plateau may deepen polarisation and undermine confidence in safe, credible polling.

## Geographical Implications

- Core Insurgency Zone: North East (Borno, Yobe)
- Hotspot Spillover: North Central (Nasarawa, Plateau)
- Episodic Risk: North West (Jigawa, Kaduna) and South East (Imo, Enugu, Anambra)
- Pattern: Attacks clustered around weakly secured communities, transport corridors, and symbolic sites (markets, mosques, police facilities)

## 3. Communal & Identity-Based Conflict



**Narrative Overview:** Communal and identity-based conflicts in December 2025 reflected persistent contestations over land, grazing routes, livelihoods, and historical grievances, with violence recurring in established flashpoint zones. The pattern was characterised by episodic clashes, targeted reprisals, and attacks on livestock, rather than sustained battlefield-style engagements.

The North Central particularly Plateau and Benue remained the principal epicentre of farmer–herder and inter-communal violence. Incidents in Bokkos<sup>[17]</sup>, Barkin Ladi<sup>[18]</sup>, and Jos South<sup>[19]</sup> illustrate a cycle of attacks and counter-attacks involving local militias, herders, and farming communities, often accompanied by cattle rustling and property destruction. These events suggest a deeply entrenched conflict dynamic rather than isolated disputes.

In the North East, land-use disputes also turned violent in Borno and Taraba, including a deadly grazing dispute in Askira/Uba<sup>[20]</sup> and a militia attack on returning IDPs in Wukari, Taraba, that produced significant fatalities<sup>[21]</sup>. This indicates that displacement, return movements, and competition over resources continue to heighten communal risk in post-conflict settings.

Smaller-scale but symbolic communal tensions were recorded in the South East, including a clash between ethnic trading groups at Garriki Market, Enugu<sup>[22]</sup>, demonstrating that identity-based friction is not limited to rural areas but can surface in urban commercial spaces.

Overall, December trends point to localised, recurring, and grievance-driven violence concentrated along contested land, grazing corridors, and mixed-identity communities.

## SECURITY & ELECTORAL IMPLICATIONS

### Security Implications:

The persistence of communal violence undermines local stability and strains policing, particularly in Plateau, Benue, Taraba, and parts of Jigawa and Nasarawa. The repeated targeting of livestock increases the likelihood of retaliatory attacks, fuelling a self-reinforcing cycle of insecurity.

Where formal dispute resolution mechanisms are weak, communities are more likely to resort to vigilante action, further eroding trust in state protection and complicating peacebuilding efforts.

<sup>[17]</sup> Zagazola. (2025, December 1). Young Fulani man killed, six cows poisoned in separate farmland incidents in Plateau State. <https://zagazola.org/index.php/breaking-news/young-fulani-man-killed-six-cows-poisoned-in-separate-farmland-incidents-in-plateau-state>

<sup>[18]</sup> Zagazola. (2025, December 12). Rising attacks on herders by Plateau militia deepen fear of reprisals as 168 cattle rustled in coordinated assaults. <https://zagazola.org/index.php/breaking-news/rising-attacks-on-herders-by-plateau-militia-deepen-fear-of-reprisals-as-168-cattle-rustled-in-coordinated-assaults>

<sup>[19]</sup> Zagazola. (2025, December 29). Five Fulanis shot by suspected Berom militias in Plateau. The Cable. <https://www.thecable.ng/five-travellers-injured-as-militia-opens-fire-on-vehicle-in-plateau/>

<sup>[20]</sup> Zagazola. (2025, December 4). Man shot dead over grazing dispute in Askira/Uba LGA in Borno. <https://zagazola.org/index.php/breaking-news/man-shot-dead-over-grazing-dispute-in-askira-uba-lga-in-borno>

<sup>[21]</sup> Linda Ikeji Blog. (2025, December 11). 17 killed, eight injured as militia attack returning IDPs in Taraba. <https://www.lindaikojisblog.com/2025/12/17-killed-eight-injured-as-militia-attack-returning-idps-in-taraba.html>

<sup>[22]</sup> Threads Newspaper. (2025, December 6). Igbo butchers left their stalls to attack the Hausa butchers [Social media post]. [https://www.threads.com/@abbaflair/post/DR82DvcgDIf?xmt=AQF0jHwYDkVArzz9MuX6IHoaFWMxKttCelrtNt8mz5hteul.f1KkGvPpPU3SH-zv7K-mjPnyim&source\\_surface=35&slf=1](https://www.threads.com/@abbaflair/post/DR82DvcgDIf?xmt=AQF0jHwYDkVArzz9MuX6IHoaFWMxKttCelrtNt8mz5hteul.f1KkGvPpPU3SH-zv7K-mjPnyim&source_surface=35&slf=1)

## Electoral Implications

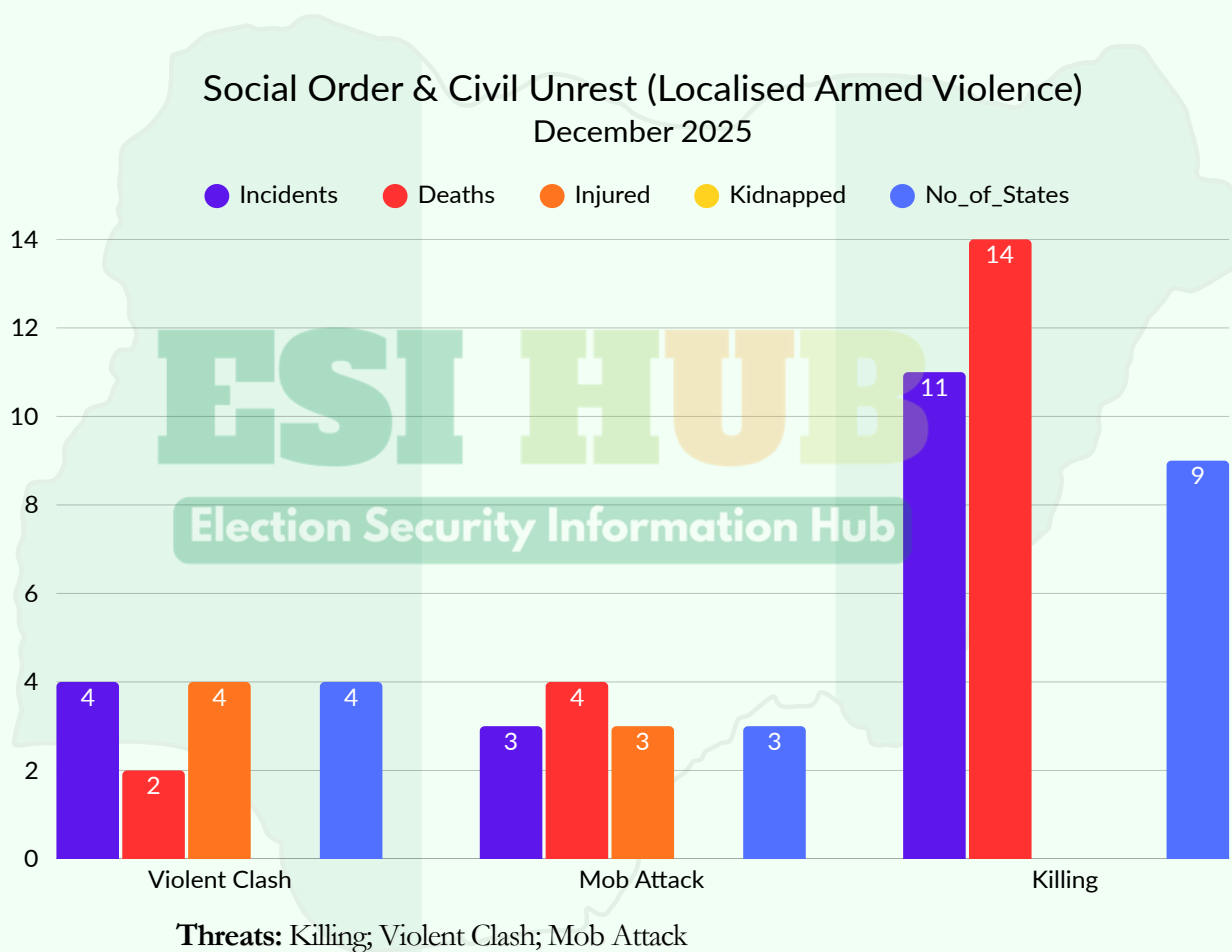
In flashpoint LGAs, communal polarisation could suppress voter turnout, particularly in mixed communities where fear of reprisals is high. Tensions between farmers and herders, or between ethnic groups, risk hardening political alignments along identity lines rather than issue-based competition.

In areas experiencing displacement or returns, uncertainty over residency, registration, and representation could complicate voter rolls and local electoral legitimacy. The need for heightened security around polling units in affected zones may also constrain logistics and increase operational costs.

## Geographical Implications

- Primary Flashpoints: North Central (Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa)
- Secondary Risk Zones: North East (Borno, Taraba) and North West (Jigawa)
- Urban-Peripheral Risk: South East (Enugu market corridors)
- Pattern: Violence clustered along contested farmland, grazing routes, and mixed-identity settlements

## 4. Social Order & Civil Unrest (Localised Armed Violence)



**Narrative Overview:** Urban and semi-urban LGAs experienced recurrent breakdowns in social order marked by spontaneous or semi-organised violence triggered by disputes, vigilante action, and crowd dynamics rather than structured criminal networks. Incidents reflected how routine conflicts can escalate rapidly where community restraint mechanisms are weak, and weapons are accessible.

In the last reporting period, several violent incidents highlighted the fragility of social order across different states. In Paikoro LGA<sup>[23]</sup>, Niger State, what began as a neighbourhood disagreement quickly escalated into a deadly clash, leaving one person dead and several others arrested. Similarly, in Kurfi LGA, Katsina State<sup>[24]</sup>, tensions between local youths and informal security actors during a protest spiraled into violence, resulting in one fatality and multiple injuries. In Kiyawa LGA, Jigawa State, a tragic case of mob justice unfolded when a woman was lynched over allegations of witchcraft, a stark reminder of the persistence of extrajudicial “justice<sup>[25]</sup>” in some communities. Meanwhile, in Eti-Osa, Lagos State, a routine parking dispute turned lethal, illustrating how everyday conflicts can erupt into fatal confrontations<sup>[26]</sup>.

Overall, December showed that localised violence is less about organised threat actors and more about fragile community order, weak dispute resolution, and low public trust in formal justice.

## SECURITY & ELECTORAL IMPLICATIONS:

### Security Implications:

Localised armed violence strains routine policing rather than counter-insurgency capacity. Rapid escalation of minor disputes into lethal outcomes complicates public-order management, particularly in densely populated areas. Mob actions and vigilante tendencies risk further breakdown of law and order, increase the likelihood of retaliatory violence, and deepen distrust between communities and security agencies.

### Electoral Implications:

In pre-election contexts, areas prone to spontaneous violence or mob action may experience heightened intimidation, discouraging voter turnout and political engagement. Crowd disorder around polling units or campaign activities could disrupt electoral logistics, deter observers, and weaken confidence in local-level electoral processes, particularly at ward and community levels.

### Geographic Implications:

- Urban Centres: South West and North Central
- Risk Profile: Densely populated LGAs with high youth unemployment and limited dispute-resolution mechanisms
- Pattern: Everyday spaces—markets, neighbourhoods, ceremonies, and transport corridors—are the most vulnerable to flashpoint violence

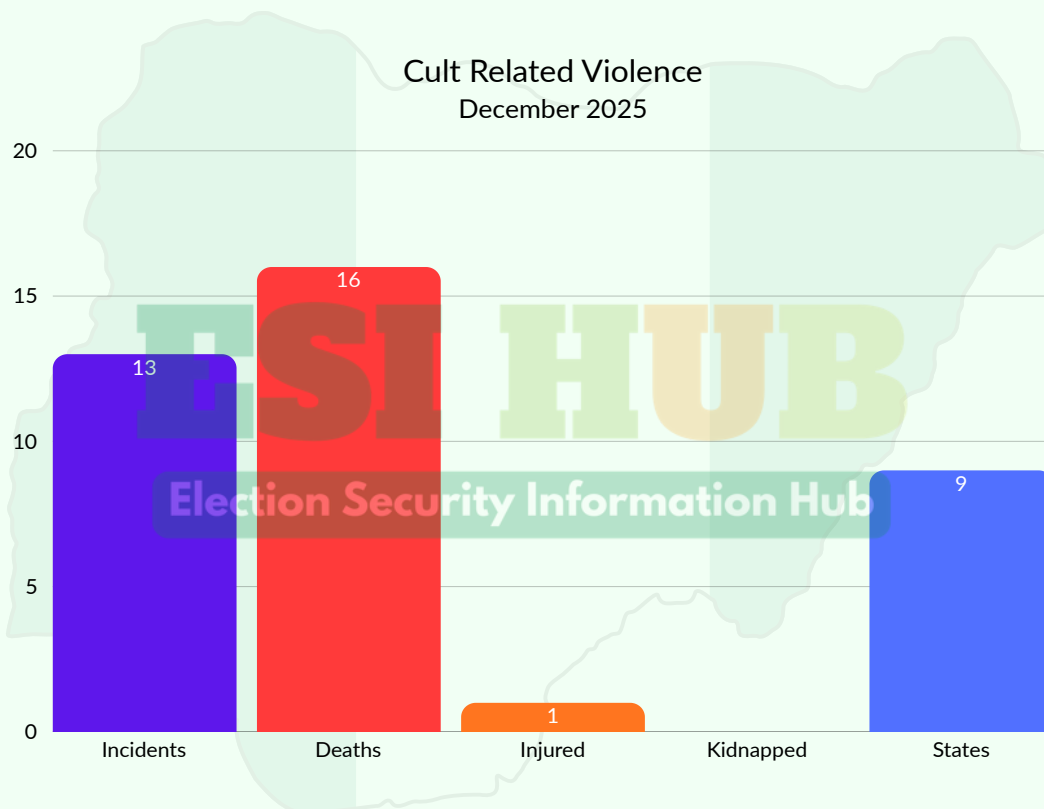
<sup>[23]</sup> Zagazola. (2025, December 1). Violent clash in Sabon-Titi area of Tunga Minna leaves one dead, several arrested. Daily Post. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/12/01/youth-clash-leaves-1-dead-dozens-arrested-in-niger>

<sup>[24]</sup> Zagazola. (2025, December 7). Civilian JTF officer shoots man dead, injures another as youths protest in Kurfi, Katsina. Akelicious. <https://www.akelicious.net/one-dead-one-injured-after-cjtf-member-opens-fire-in-katsina-community/>

<sup>[25]</sup> Daily Post. (2025, December 10). Jigawa: 50-year-old woman killed over alleged witchcraft. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/12/10/jigawa-50-year-old-woman-killed-over-alleged-witchcraft/>

<sup>[26]</sup> The Guardian Newspaper. (2025, December 12). Driver runs over Lagos man over parking space dispute. <https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria/metro/driver-runs-over-lagos-man-over-parking-space-dispute/>

## 5. Cult-Related Violence



**Narrative Overview:** Cult-related violence remained a prominent security challenge across southern Nigeria in December 2025, driven primarily by intra- and inter-cult rivalries, territorial disputes, and power struggles rather than ideological motivations. These incidents were concentrated in urban and peri-urban areas, with a notable presence in South West, South South, and South East states, reflecting both the historical strongholds of cult activity and the mobility of violent groups across local government boundaries.

The pattern of violence largely involved armed clashes, targeted killings, and retaliatory attacks. In Kwara<sup>[27]</sup> and Ogun states<sup>[28]</sup>, clashes between rival cult groups resulted in fatalities, including law enforcement personnel. Similar incidents were recorded in Lagos<sup>[29]</sup>, Edo<sup>[30]</sup>, Rivers<sup>[31]</sup>, Delta, and Ondo<sup>[32]</sup>, often involving the Neo Black Axe Movement (NBM/Aye)<sup>[33]</sup>, Eiye, and Buccaneers, with victims including cult members, community members, and in some cases high-ranking cult leaders. In certain cases, internal power struggles led to targeted killings of members within the same cult<sup>[34]</sup>.

While police interventions were recorded, such as raids on initiation ceremonies and arrests of suspected members<sup>[35]</sup>. Several incidents went unaddressed at the time of reporting, highlighting gaps in rapid security response across affected LGAs. The pattern suggests a persistent risk of escalation in urban centres, particularly in peri-urban settlements where law enforcement presence is limited.

<sup>[27]</sup> The Vanguard Newspaper. (2025, December 2). Rival cult clash leaves one dead in Kwara Poly. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/12/rival-cult-clash-leaves-one-dead-in-kwara-poly/>

<sup>[28]</sup> Daily Post. (2025, December 1). Police officer, one other feared dead as rival cult groups clash in Ogun community. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/12/01/police-officer-one-other-feared-dead-as-rival-cult-groups-clash-in-ogun-community/>

<sup>[29]</sup> The Punch Newspaper. (2025, December 11). Two shot dead in Lagos suspected cult attack. <https://punchng.com/two-shot-dead-in-lagos-suspected-cult-attack/>

<sup>[30]</sup> The Punch Newspaper. (2025, December 15). Police raid cult initiation ceremony in Edo, kill one. <https://punchng.com/police-raid-cult-initiation-ceremony-in-edo-kill-one/>

<sup>[31]</sup> The Punch Newspaper. (2025, December 15). Two killed, one injured in Rivers cult clash. <https://punchng.com/two-killed-one-injured-in-rivers-cult-clash/>

<sup>[32]</sup> The Punch Newspaper. (2025, December 17). Buccaneers cultist Don P killed by Eiye cult group in Ondo. <https://punchng.com/ondo-poly-student-shot-dead-by-cultists/>

<sup>[33]</sup> Naija Confra. (2025, December 9). The NBM (Aye) cult group has killed one of their members in Ozoro, Delta State [Tweet].

<sup>[34]</sup> Daily Post. (2025, December 15). Edo cult leader reportedly killed in power tussle. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/12/15/edo-cult-leader-reportedly-killed-in-power-tussle/>

<sup>[35]</sup> The Punch Newspaper. (2025, December 15). Police raid cult initiation ceremony in Edo, kill one. <https://punchng.com/police-raid-cult-initiation-ceremony-in-edo-kill-one/>

## **SECURITY & ELECTORAL IMPLICATIONS:**

### **Security Implications:**

The entrenchment of cult networks presents a sustained internal security challenge. Their ability to operate across urban and peri-urban nodes, coupled with violent enforcement of territorial dominance, complicates policing strategies and intelligence gathering. Fatal incidents targeting both cult members and civilians can undermine public confidence and exacerbate fear within communities.

Persistent retaliatory attacks increase the likelihood of cycles of violence in hotspots, while the limited response capacity of security agencies in some areas exposes civilians and law enforcement personnel to heightened risk.

### **Electoral Implications:**

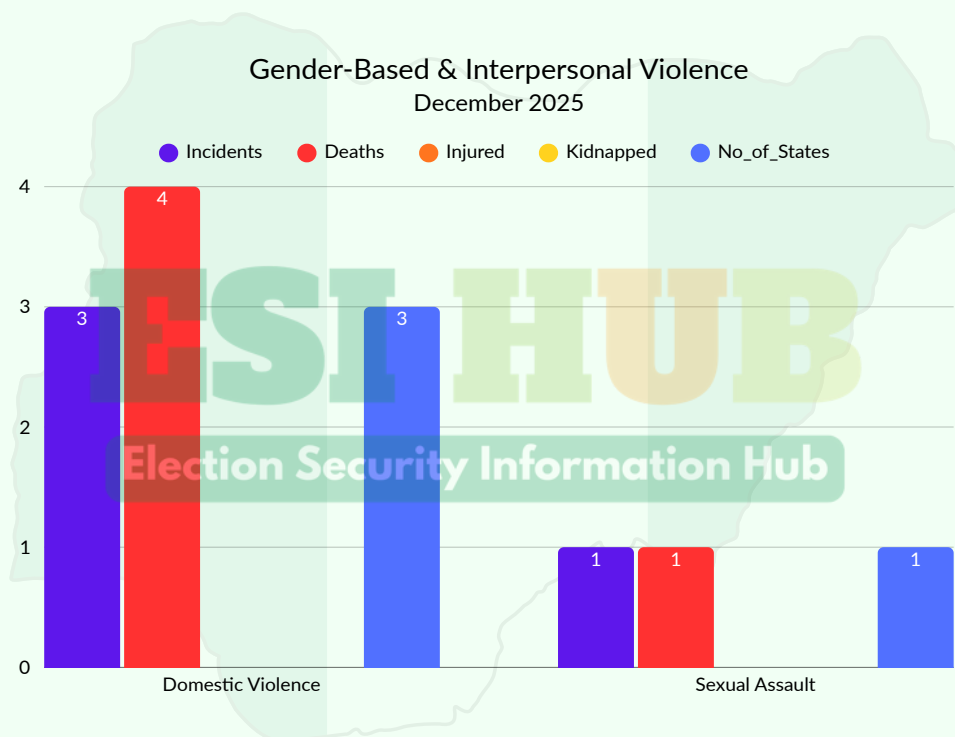
Cult-related violence poses direct and indirect risks to electoral processes. Fear of targeted attacks may suppress voter turnout in high-risk LGAs such as Ijebu Ode, Benin City, and Ajah. Electoral material deployment and campaign activities may require intensive security arrangements, particularly in areas with ongoing intercultural rivalry or recent. Additionally, the presence of organised violent groups within urban wards could create conditions for coercion or intimidation during electoral events.

### **Geographical Implications:**

- Core Hotspots: South West (Lagos, Ogun, Ondo), South South (Delta, Rivers, Edo, Bayelsa), South East (Abia)
- Urban & Peri-urban Nodes: Ilorin East, Ijebu Ode, Ajah, Benin City, Owo, Umuahia, Rumuigbo
- Emerging Patterns: Targeted killings of high-ranking cult members, retaliatory attacks between rival groups
- Pattern: Incidents concentrated along community and campus nodes, with frequent armed clashes and opportunistic attacks in poorly policed areas

Overall, December patterns indicate that cult-related violence is primarily driven by competition for territorial dominance and intra-group power struggles. The persistence of such violence in urban and peri-urban nodes underscores the need for proactive policing, intelligence-led interventions, and community-level risk mitigation strategies to safeguard civilian populations and electoral integrity.

## 6. Gender-Based & Interpersonal Violence



**Narrative Overview:** Gender-based and interpersonal violence (GBV/IV) remained a concerning security issue in December 2025, largely occurring within private and domestic spheres rather than as part of communal or political conflicts. These incidents were primarily rooted in entrenched power imbalances, family disputes, and gender vulnerability, affecting women, children, and other dependent individuals across multiple regions.

Cases recorded in Enugu, Benue, Katsina, and Imo illustrate the spectrum of threats under this category. In Nsukka, a 19-year-old girl was murdered by her cousin following allegations of sexual abuse, highlighting vulnerabilities to familial sexual violence<sup>[36]</sup>. In Buruku, Benue, domestic tensions over financial disagreements escalated to a patricidal incident, where a son killed his father<sup>[37]</sup>. Similarly, in Katsina, a paternity dispute resulted in the murder of a nursing mother and her infant, demonstrating the intersection of domestic violence with gendered and child vulnerability<sup>[38]</sup>. In Imo, spousal violence culminated in the death of a wife at the hands of her husband<sup>[39]</sup>.

<sup>[36]</sup> Linda Ikeji Blog. (2025, December 3). 19-year-old girl murdered by her cousin after sexual abuse allegation. <https://www.lindaikojisblog.com/2025/12/you-are-the-real-killer-nigerian-writer-charles-ogbu-calls-out-enugu-police-for-failing-19-year-old-girl-murdered-by-her-cousin-after-sexual-abuse-allegation-video.html>

<sup>[37]</sup> Zagazola. (2025, December 8). Son kills father over money dispute in Buruku in Benue. Naija News. <https://www.naijanews.com/2025/12/08/son-kills-father-during-money-dispute-in-benue/>

<sup>[38]</sup> Linda Ikeji Blog. (2025, December 11). Police arrest suspect for killing nursing mother and her baby over paternity dispute in Katsina. <https://www.lindaikojisblog.com/2025/12/police-arrest-suspect-for-killing-nursing-mother-and-her-baby-over-paternity-dispute-in-katsina.html>

<sup>[39]</sup> The Punch Newspaper. (2025, December 14). Man beats wife to death in Imo. <https://punchng.com/man-beats-wife-to-death-in-imo/>

While law enforcement responses were initiated in several cases, including arrests and investigations, these incidents underscore the ongoing risk of private-sphere violence and the need for proactive interventions to protect vulnerable populations. Patterns suggest that domestic and interpersonal conflicts can rapidly escalate to lethal outcomes when unaddressed, emphasising the importance of early reporting mechanisms, community awareness, and responsive policing.

## **SECURITY & ELECTORAL IMPLICATIONS:**

### **Security Implications:**

Domestic and interpersonal violence present a significant public safety challenge, particularly in contexts where family disputes, gender power imbalances, or paternity issues remain unresolved. Lethal outcomes in private settings strain local law enforcement and underscore gaps in protective interventions for vulnerable populations, including women and children. These incidents, though non-political, can generate community unrest and decrease public confidence in the effectiveness of local policing.

### **Electoral Implications:**

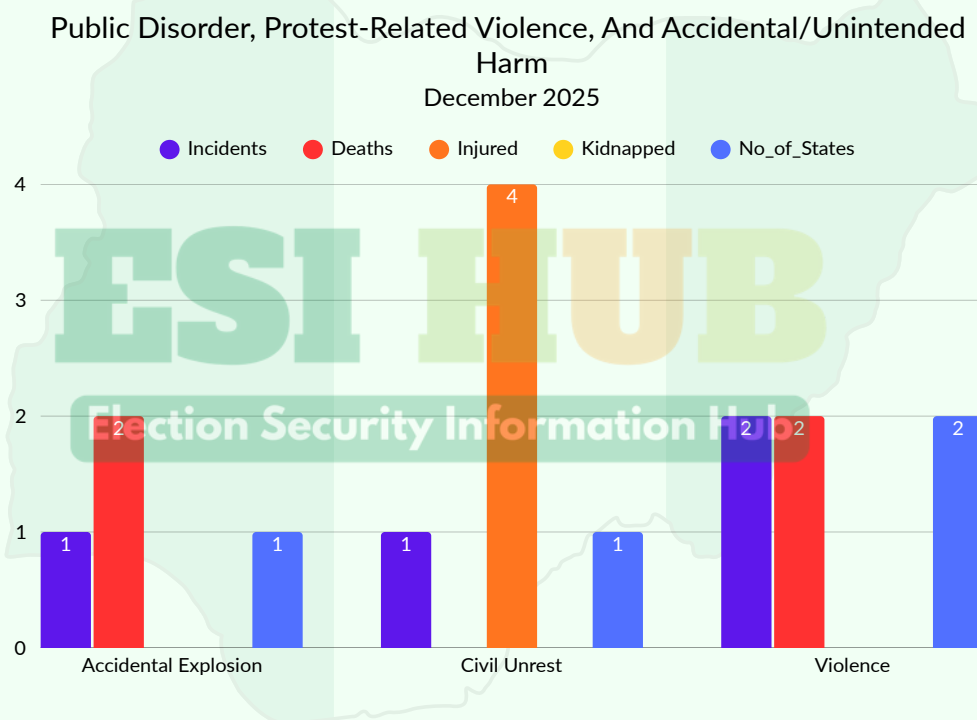
While GBV and interpersonal violence are largely private in nature, their prevalence can indirectly influence electoral processes. Communities experiencing high levels of domestic insecurity may exhibit reduced civic engagement, as fear and trauma limit participation in public gatherings, including voting and campaign events. Additionally, law enforcement resources diverted to address private-sphere crimes may reduce capacity for electoral security in affected LGAs.

### **Geographical Implications:**

- Core Hotspots: South East (Enugu, Imo), North Central (Benue), North West (Katsina)
- Vulnerable Populations: Women, children, spouses, and minors
- Pattern: Incidents concentrated in domestic or familial contexts, often escalating from disputes over financial, paternity, or personal grievances
- Emerging Concern: Sexual assault allegations leading to retaliatory or lethal outcomes within families

Overall, December patterns indicate that gender-based and interpersonal violence remain a persistent, private-sphere security threat. Effective prevention requires strengthened policing, timely investigative responses, community education, and accessible support structures for victims to reduce the risk of lethal escalation and broader community harm.

## 7. Public Disorder, Protest-Related Violence, And Accidental/Unintended Harm



**Narrative Overview:** Public disorder, protest-related violence, and accidental harm represented discrete yet significant threats to community safety in December 2025. Unlike organised criminality or gender-based violence, these incidents were primarily collective or unintentional in nature, often stemming from local disputes, governance failures, economic pressures, or unsafe practices.

In Ebonyi State, a cultural festival in Ohaisu Villages escalated into a deadly clash among youths, resulting in at least one fatality, highlighting the potential for communal tensions to turn violent during mass gatherings<sup>[40]</sup>. In Bauchi, herder-related violence in Zaki LGA led to injuries and property destruction, demonstrating ongoing friction between local communities and pastoral actors in the North East<sup>[41]</sup>. In Lagos, an incident on Victoria Island saw restaurant staff attack state environmental taskforce officers during an enforcement exercise, reflecting a trend of civil unrest in urban areas where economic or regulatory grievances intersect with public violence<sup>[42]</sup>.

Additionally, unintentional harm was recorded in Anambra, where a fireworks explosion during festive activities killed two civilians, underscoring the risks of accidental or poorly managed events<sup>[43]</sup>. While these incidents differ from organised criminality in intent, they contribute to the overall security burden and reveal vulnerabilities in public safety management, crowd control, and hazard mitigation.

<sup>[40]</sup> The Vanguard Newspaper. (2025, December 1). Festival turns tragic as youth killed in Ebonyi community clash. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/12/festival-turns-tragic-as-youth-killed-in-ebonyi-community-clash/>

<sup>[41]</sup> Zagazola. (2025, December 8). Herders attack and injure man, destroy property in Zaki LGA in Bauchi. Naija News. <https://www.naijanews.com/2025/12/08/fulani-herdsmen-attack-man-destroy-property-in-bauchi/>

<sup>[42]</sup> Linda Ikeji Blog. (2025, December 10). Lagos restaurant sealed after staff attacked state environmental taskforce officers. <https://www.lindaikojisblog.com/2025/12/lagos-restaurant-sealed-after-staff-attacked-state-environmental-taskforce-officers.html>

<sup>[43]</sup> The Vanguard Newspaper. (2025, December 30). Fireworks explosion allegedly kills two in Anambra. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/12/fireworks-explosion-allegedly-kills-two-in-anambra/>

## **SECURITY & ELECTORAL IMPLICATIONS:**

### **Security Implications:**

Public disorder and protest-related violence can escalate quickly, especially in urban and peri-urban nodes where gatherings intersect with law enforcement operations. Such incidents strain police resources, disrupt public order, and can create flashpoints for wider communal conflicts, as seen in Ebonyi and Bauchi. Accidental harm, while unintentional, highlights gaps in regulatory oversight and risk management in public events, posing threats to civilian safety and potentially overwhelming emergency response capabilities.

### **Electoral Implications:**

While these incidents are largely non-political, they can indirectly affect electoral participation and logistics. Areas experiencing civil unrest or violent clashes during public events may see suppressed voter turnout due to fear of violence. Similarly, accidental harm incidents may lead to temporary restrictions on gatherings, indirectly affecting campaign activities, civic engagement, and polling preparations in affected LGAs.

### **Geographical Implications:**

- Core Hotspots: South East (Ebonyi, Anambra), South West (Lagos), North East (Bauchi)
- Urban & Peri-Urban Nodes: Victoria Island, Umuchu, Ohaisu Villages
- Pattern: Incidents concentrated around communal gatherings, enforcement interactions, and public celebrations; accidental incidents arising from poorly managed festive or cultural activities
- Emerging Concern: Increasing risk of lethal outcomes from public events and unmanaged civilian disputes

Overall, December patterns indicate that public disorder, protest-related violence, and accidental harm are primarily situational threats that arise from communal interactions, regulatory enforcement challenges, and unsafe practices. While these incidents are less organised than criminal networks, they pose acute risks to public safety, resource deployment, and community confidence in governance structures.

## **8. GEOPOLITICAL ZONE ANALYSIS**

In December 2025, Nigeria's threat landscape exhibited pronounced regional differentiation, with each geopolitical zone experiencing distinct dominant threat profiles shaped by local conflict drivers, criminal economies, and social dynamics. While insecurity remained nationally spread, its expression and intensity varied sharply across zones, underscoring the need for zone-specific security and electoral risk responses.

### Spread of Threats Across Geopolitical Zones

Threat Category	North Central	North East	North West	South East	South South	South West
Accidental Explosion	0	0	0	1	0	0
Armed Robbery	1	0	0	3	2	1
Banditry	6	0	11	0	0	0
Civil Unrest	0	0	0	0	0	1
Communal Clash	6	2	0	1	0	0
Cultism	1	0	0	1	7	4
Domestic Violence	1	0	1	1	0	0
Farmer-Herder Conflict	6	2	2	0	0	0
Gunmen Attacks	3	0	2	4	0	0
Inter-Ethnic Conflict	0	1	0	0	0	0
Kidnapping	3	1	0	6	2	3
Killing	0	3	0	3	2	3
Mob Attack	0	0	2	0	0	1
Organ Harvesting	0	0	0	0	1	0
Reprisal Attack	1	0	0	0	0	0
Sexual Assault	0	0	0	1	0	0
Terrorism	1	8	0	0	0	0
Violence	0	1	0	1	0	0
Violent Clash	1	0	2	0	0	1

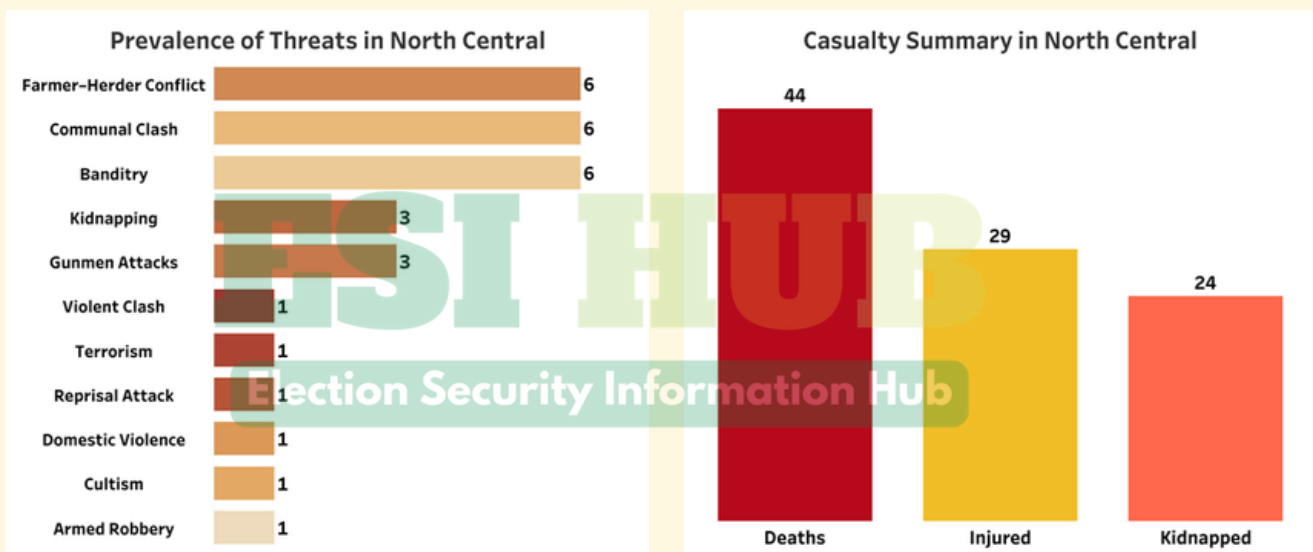
source: ESI-Hub 2026

Overall, Northern zones were predominantly affected by organised violence and resource-driven conflict, while Southern zones faced crime-driven and social-order threats, particularly kidnapping and cultism. This section provides a zone-by-zone assessment of dominant threats and their broader security implications.

### North Central Zone: Converging Conflict Pressures

#### Dominant Threats:

Banditry, Communal Clashes, Farmer-Herder Conflict

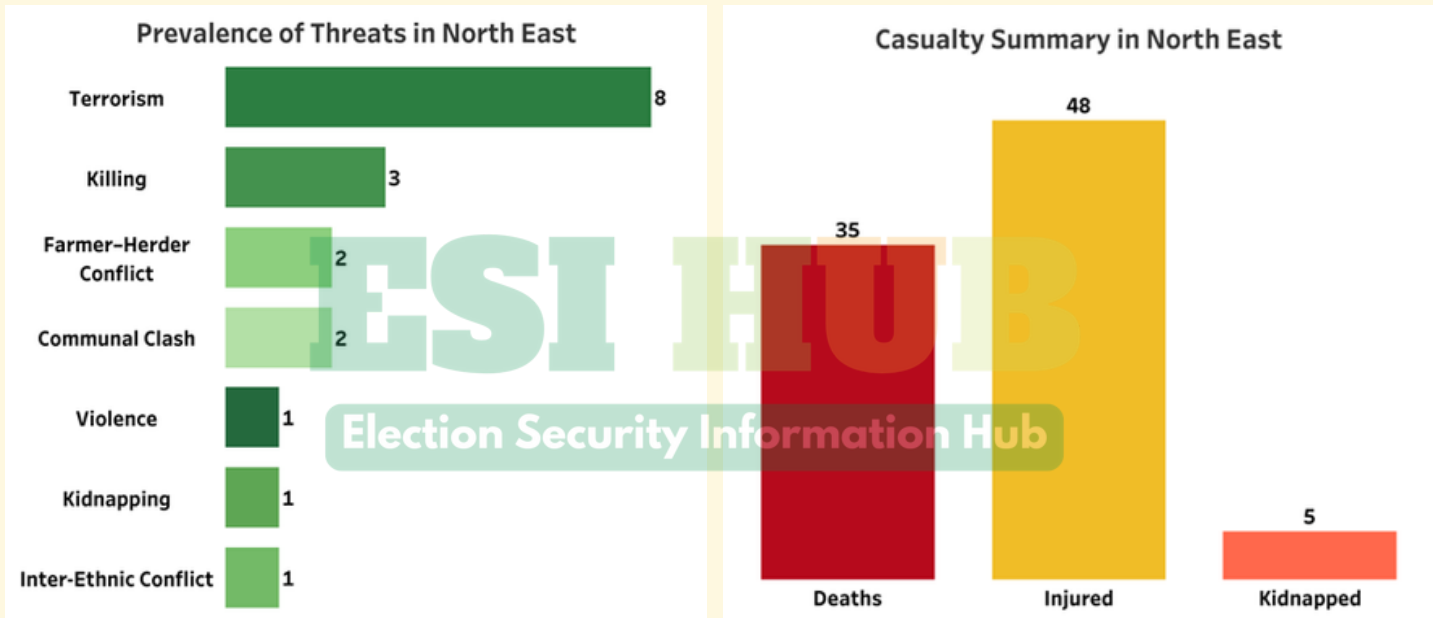


The North Central zone experienced a convergence of banditry, communal clashes, and farmer–herder conflict in December 2025, reflecting its role as a transitional corridor between Northern and Southern Nigeria. In Niger State, armed bandits carried out coordinated attacks on rural communities in Borgu LGA, resulting in civilian casualties and displacement, underscoring the persistence of organised criminal violence in the zone.<sup>[44]</sup> At the same time, communal tensions escalated in Plateau State, where a violent clash in Jos South LGA linked to farmer–herder disputes led to fatalities and renewed hostilities between communities.<sup>[45]</sup> These incidents illustrate how long-standing land-use grievances increasingly intersect with armed criminality, creating overlapping conflict systems that heighten the risk of rapid escalation and complicate early-warning and stabilisation efforts.

### North East Zone: Persistent Insurgency with Residual Violence

**Dominant Threats:**

Terrorism, Killing, Communal Clashes



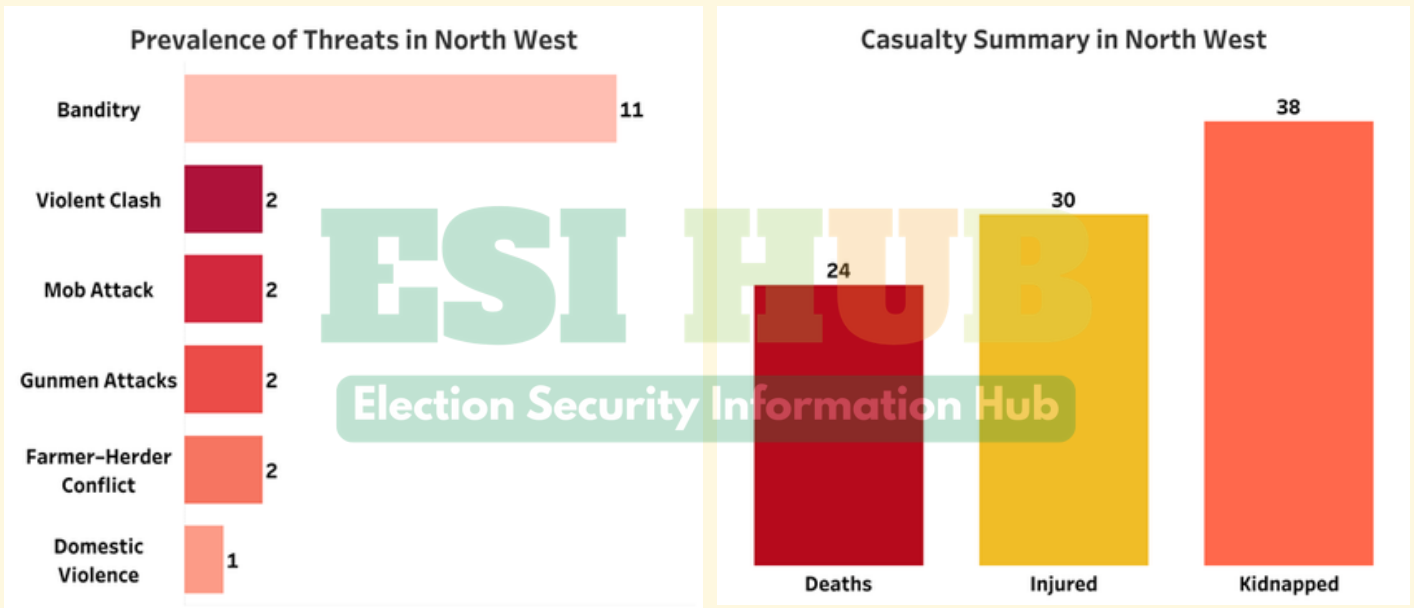
In December 2025, the North East continued to exhibit residual insurgency-related violence, with terrorism remaining the dominant threat, particularly in Borno State. Suspected insurgents attacked civilian settlements in Dikwa LGA, disrupting livelihoods and humanitarian activity and reinforcing the zone’s status as an area of incomplete stabilisation.<sup>[46]</sup> Beyond insurgency, secondary conflict dynamics were evident in Taraba State, where inter-ethnic violence in Wukari LGA resulted in fatalities and displacement, highlighting the persistence of localised communal fault lines.<sup>[47]</sup> Together, these incidents demonstrate that while large-scale territorial insurgency may have declined, the zone remains vulnerable to sporadic high-impact attacks capable of undermining governance, humanitarian access, and electoral preparedness.

<sup>[44]</sup> Punch Newspapers. (2025, December). Bandits attack Borgu communities in Niger State. <https://t.co/M6wgk9fb8I>  
<sup>[45]</sup> Vanguard Newspapers. (2025, December). Communal clash erupts in Jos South as farmers killed. <https://t.co/A9vSQt6Tlp>  
<sup>[46]</sup> Zagazola Makama. (2025, December). Insurgents attack civilians in Dikwa, Borno State. <https://zagazola.org/>  
<sup>[47]</sup> Linda Ikeji Blog. (2025, December). Inter-ethnic conflict claims lives in Wukari, Taraba State. <https://www.lindaikajisblog.com/2025/12/17-kill.html>

## North West Zone: Epicentre of Banditry

### Dominant Threats:

Banditry



The North West remained the epicentre of banditry in December 2025, with violent attacks and mass abductions continuing across Zamfara, Katsina, and Kaduna States. In Zamfara State, bandits abducted residents in Tsafe LGA, reinforcing patterns of rural depopulation and civilian insecurity.<sup>[48]</sup> Similarly, in Katsina State, armed attacks on communities in Faskari LGA further highlighted the reach and operational freedom of bandit groups operating from forested enclaves.<sup>[49]</sup> These incidents confirm the entrenchment of a criminal war economy in the North West, posing sustained risks to civilian movement, rural livelihoods, and the effective conduct of electoral logistics.

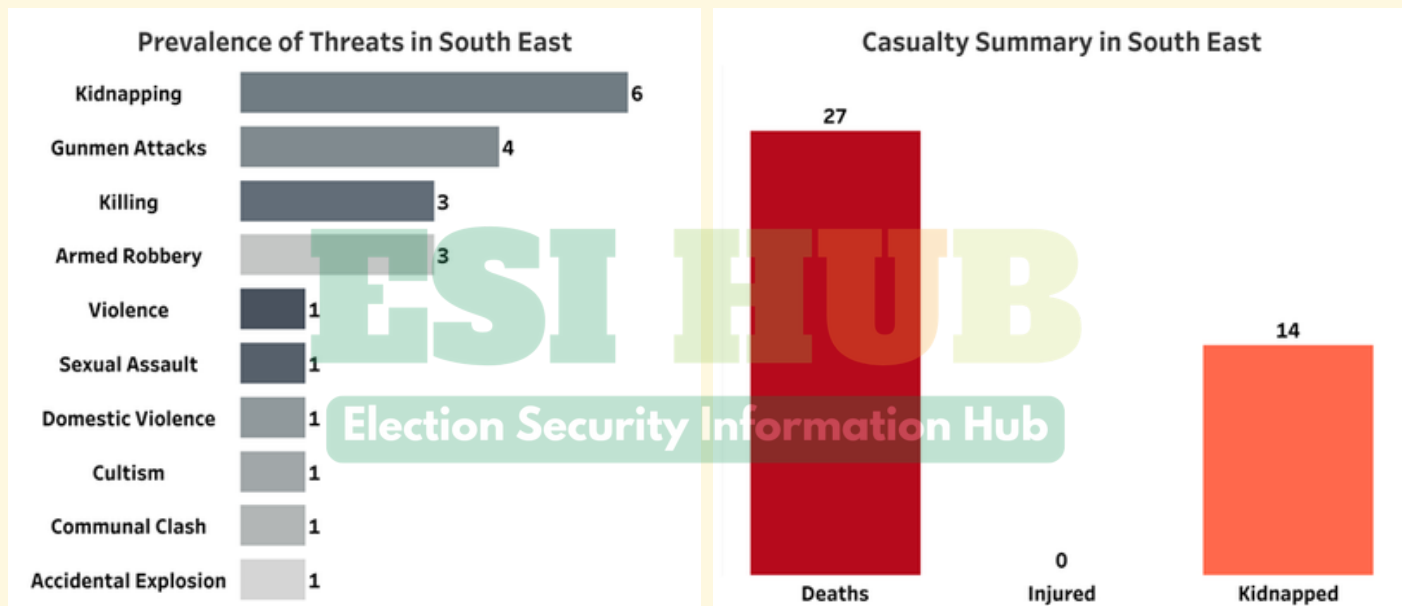
<sup>[48]</sup> Daily Trust. (2025, December). Bandits abduct residents in Tsafe, Zamfara State. <https://dailytrust.com/>

<sup>[49]</sup> Linda Ikeji Blog (2025, December). Bandits attack Faskari community in Katsina State. <https://www.lindaikojisblog.com/2025/12/police.html>

## South East Zone: Criminal Violence and Armed Attacks

### Dominant Threats:

Kidnapping, Gunmen Attacks



The South East was characterised by targeted criminal violence in December 2025, particularly gunmen attacks and kidnappings. In Imo State, gunmen attacked a security checkpoint in Owerri West LGA, killing security personnel and heightening fear in urban centres.<sup>[50]</sup> In Anambra State, the abduction of a prominent civilian in Nnewi North LGA underscored the persistence of kidnapping as a strategic criminal tactic rather than mass abduction.<sup>[51]</sup> These incidents contributed to a fragmented security environment marked by localised but highly disruptive violence, with implications for civic participation and public confidence in state security institutions.

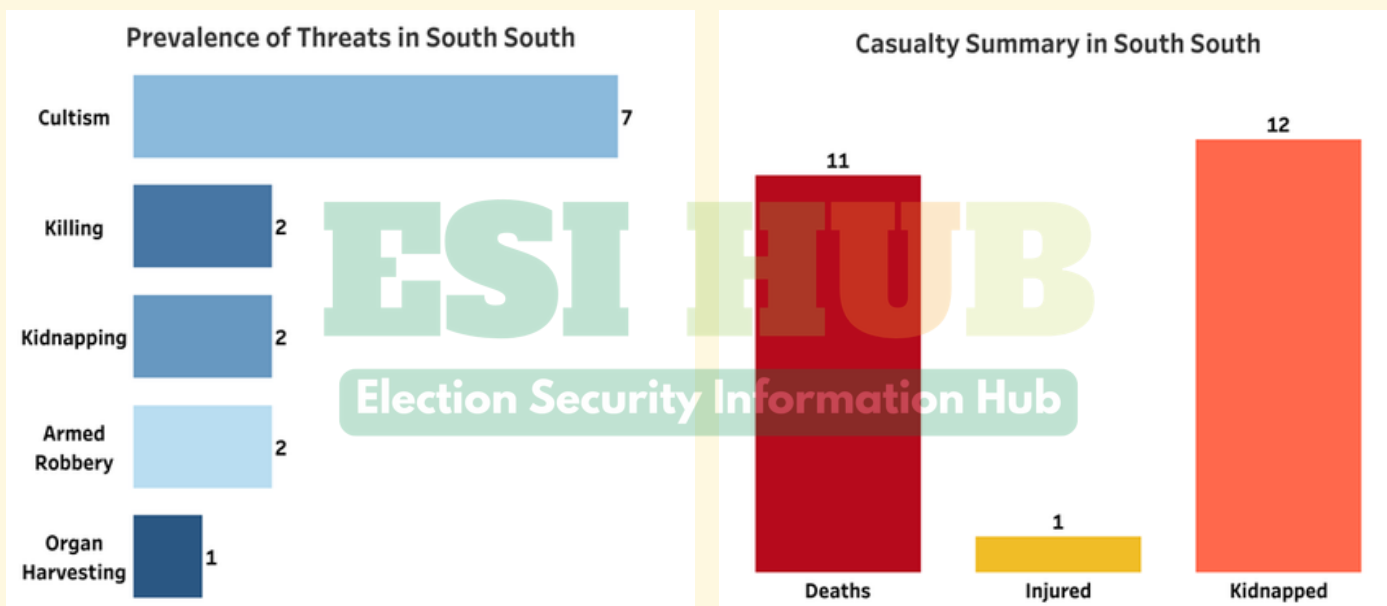
<sup>[50]</sup> Punch Newspapers. (2025, December). Gunmen shoot Catholic priest, attack checkpoint in Imo State. <https://punchng.com/gunmen-shoot-catholic-prie/>

<sup>[51]</sup> Daily Post. (2025, December). Kidnappers abduct businessman in Anambra State. <https://dailypost.ng/>

## South South Zone: Cultism-Driven Insecurity

### Dominant Threats:

Cultism



In December 2025, the South South zone was dominated by cultism-related violence, particularly in major urban centres. In Rivers State, rival cult groups engaged in violent clashes in Port Harcourt, resulting in fatalities and reinforcing the entrenched presence of gang networks.<sup>[52]</sup> Similarly, cult-linked shootings in Warri South LGA, Delta State, contributed to heightened insecurity in peri-urban communities.<sup>[53]</sup> The prevalence of such incidents indicates that insecurity in the zone is driven less by opportunistic crime and more by organised group rivalry, with significant risks for urban stability and political processes.

<sup>[52]</sup> Punch Newspapers. (2025, December). Cult clash claims lives in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

<https://punchng.com/>

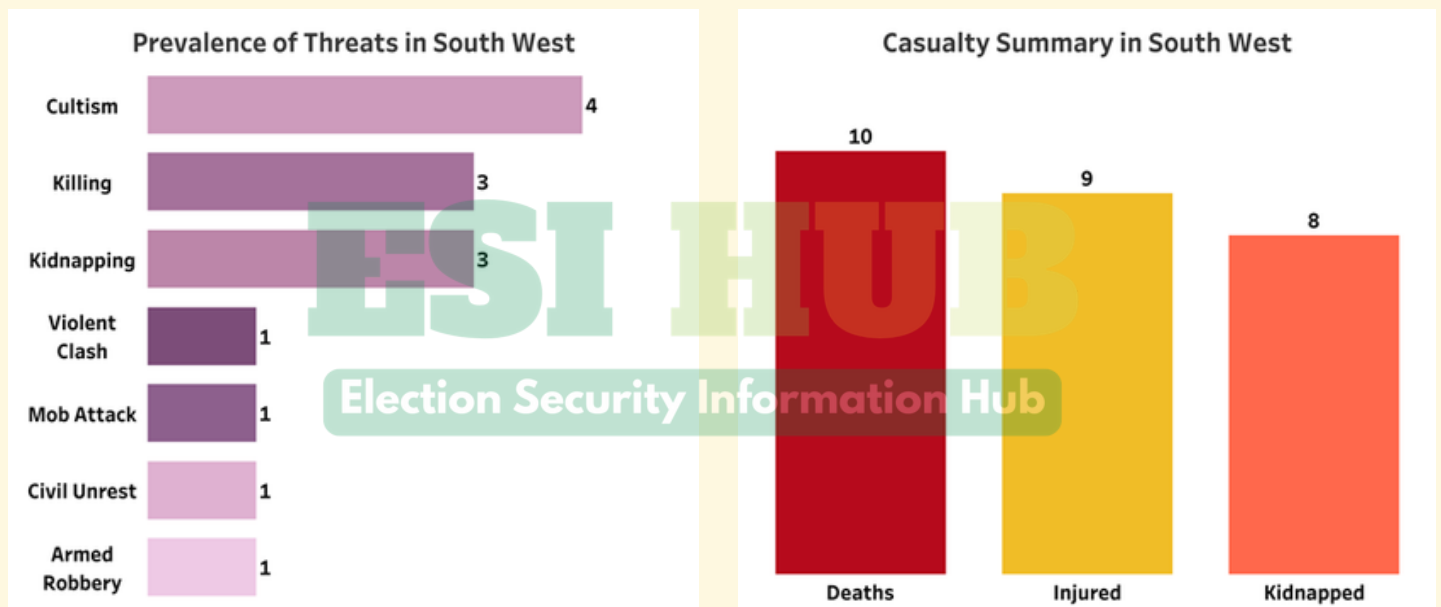
<sup>[53]</sup> Vanguard Newspapers. (2025, December). Cult-related shooting reported in Warri South, Delta State.

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/>

## South West Zone: Hybrid Urban–Rural Threat Environment

### Dominant Threats:

Cultism, Killing, Kidnapping



The South West faced a hybrid threat landscape in December 2025, combining urban cult violence with rural and peri-urban kidnapping. In Lagos State, violent clashes between rival cult groups, notably Eiye and Aye confraternities in Ikorodu, exemplified the persistence of cultism and criminal opportunism in urban centres.<sup>[54]</sup> Conversely, the rural fringes of Ondo, Oyo, and Ekiti States experienced increased kidnapping activity, driven by armed groups exploiting forest reserves and highway corridors. This trend was further underscored by a deadly attack involving gunmen in the broader South West security environment, highlighting the growing boldness of armed actors.<sup>[55]</sup> The coexistence of these threats signals rising vulnerability along key economic and logistical corridors and presents increasing challenges for security management and electoral logistics in the zone.

### Comparative Zonal Insight

December 2025 data reveal a **structural divide** in Nigeria's security environment:

1. **Northern zones** are dominated by **organised violence, banditry, and resource-driven conflict**, often producing high casualty and displacement risks.
2. **Southern zones** face **crime-driven and social-order threats**, particularly cultism and kidnapping, with strong urban and political linkages.

This divergence reinforces the need for differentiated security responses, as a uniform national strategy would fail to address the specific drivers operating within each geopolitical zone.

<sup>[54]</sup> Punch Newspapers. (2026, January 1). Gunmen kill man, abduct twins in Edo State.

<https://punchng.com/gunmen-kill-man-abduct-twins-in-edo/>

<sup>[55]</sup> Naija Confra. (2026, January 1). Clash between Eiye (ACN) and Aye (NBM) in the Agbede area of Ikorodu, Lagos State [Post]. X (formerly Twitter).

<https://x.com/naijaconfra/status/2006811174604517882>

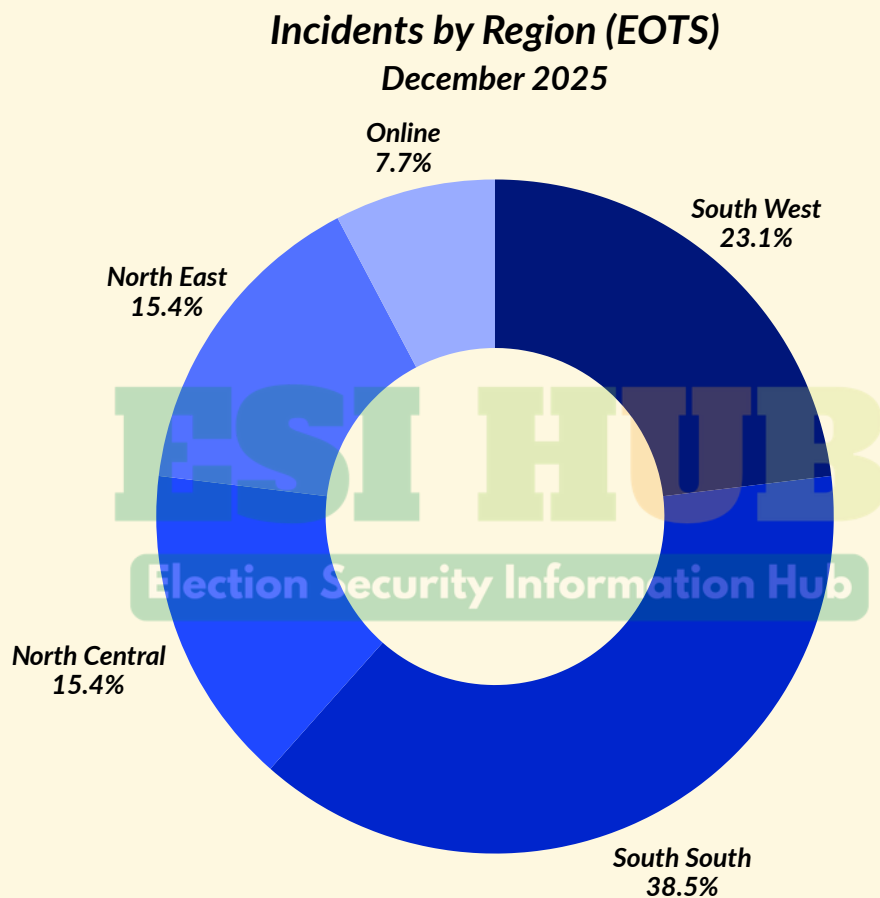
## 6. ELECTORAL OFFENCES TRACKING (EOTS)

### 6.1 Legal & Normative Framework

The tracking and analysis of electoral offences in this report are grounded in Nigeria's domestic legal statutes and the voluntary commitments made by political actors. The primary legal framework is the Electoral Act 2022, which explicitly defines offences and prescribes penalties for actions ranging from vote-buying and undue influence to violence at polling units and the destruction of electoral materials. Concurrently, the National Peace Committee (NPC) Peace Accords, signed by presidential and later gubernatorial candidates, establish a normative framework committing signatories to issue-based campaigning, non-violence, and the respect of electoral outcomes. This EOTS section measures the breach of both the hard law of the state and the soft law of political commitment, providing a dual-lens analysis of the integrity of the pre-election environment.

### 6.2 Offence Categories & December 2025 Trends

In December 2025, the Electoral Offences Tracking System (EOTS) recorded and verified 12 electoral-related incidents across 5 geopolitical zones. December's incidents were concentrated around intra-elite contestation, political intimidation, identity-based narratives, and coercive security responses. The period reflects a latent but escalating pre-election risk environment, where political competition increasingly manifests through intimidation, factional conflict, and narrative manipulation rather than structured campaigning.



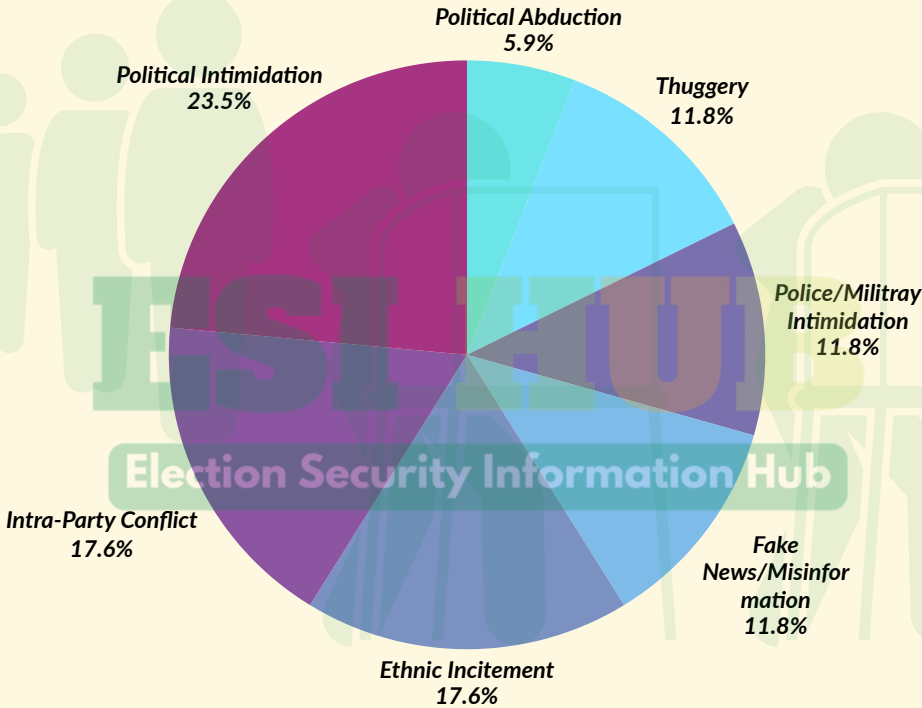
The data indicates that the South–South emerged as the primary hotspot for political tension and intimidation in December 2025, reflecting a concentration of elite-driven contestation in the zone. Rather than isolated spikes of violence, incidents were distributed across the month, pointing to a pattern of persistent risk in the pre-election period. Instability was largely driven by political intimidation and intra-party conflicts, underscoring how elite competition—often enacted through proxies such as political thugs, media actors, and informal security groups—remains a central trigger of insecurity.

While formal violations of the Peace Accord were limited, the prevalence of informal intimidation suggests that political actors largely complied with the letter of the agreement while undermining its spirit through coercive tactics. Notably, all recorded incidents occurred in the pre-election phase, reinforcing the structural volatility that characterises Nigeria’s electoral environment before polling day.

State response was predominantly reactive rather than preventive, with most cases lacking clear or timely intervention beyond post-incident investigations or ad hoc mediation. Although most incidents were low-fatality, they carried high intimidation value—shaping political behaviour, constraining civic space, and escalating tensions. The Benue incident (0130) stands out as a deadly outlier within an otherwise non-fatal landscape.

Finally, while physical incidents constituted the bulk of recorded events, online misinformation and ethnic incitement played a strategic role in amplifying tensions, demonstrating that digital spaces are now integral to contemporary electoral conflict dynamics. The dominant offence categories recorded during the period are outlined below, in order of prevalence.

### Distribution of Electoral Offences December 2025



Data source: ESI-Hub 2025

### **Intra-Party and Inter-Party Conflicts (5 incidents)**

The most prevalent category in December 2025 involved intra-party and inter-party conflicts, accounting for 5 verified incidents. These incidents were primarily elite-driven and centred on struggles for party control, candidate positioning, and influence ahead of future electoral cycles. Recorded cases included:

1. Physical invasions and disruptions of party primary venues.
2. Prolonged feuds between incumbent governors, lawmakers, and party factions.
3. Breakdown of negotiated peace agreements between political actors

These incidents are analytically significant because they demonstrate that political contestation is already shifting from negotiation to confrontation, even in the absence of official campaign timelines. Persistent intra-party instability also weakens internal democratic processes and increases the likelihood of splinter violence as elections draw closer.

### **Political Intimidation, Thuggery, and Targeted Violence (4 incidents)**

December 2025 recorded 4 incidents involving political intimidation, thuggery, or targeted violence against political actors and affiliates. These incidents included:

1. Attacks on politically connected individuals linked to public statements or perceived loyalties.
2. The use of political thugs to enforce dominance or silence opponents.
3. Violent clashes at politically symbolic public events.

Although casualties were limited during the period, the use of violence as a tool of political messaging is a critical early warning indicator. Such incidents normalise coercion within political competition and reduce the space for peaceful participation, particularly for non-elite actors.

### **Disinformation, Misinformation, and Fake News (3 incidents)**

Information disorder featured prominently in December, with 3 verified incidents involving disinformation, misinformation, or the deliberate recycling of misleading content. These incidents were largely media-driven and digitally amplified, including:

1. False attribution of violence to state security actors.
2. Recycled videos framed to incite ethnic resentment.
3. Misleading narratives amplified by traditional and online media platforms.

These cases underscore the increasing weaponisation of information in Nigeria's pre-election space. Disinformation serves as a low-risk, high-impact tactic for shaping public sentiment, inflaming identity divisions, and undermining trust in institutions, particularly when accountability mechanisms remain weak.

## Ethnic Incitement and Identity-Based Hostility (3 incidents)

Closely linked to information disorder, 3 incidents in December involved ethnic incitement or identity-based hostility. These incidents were primarily circulated online but carried significant offline implications. Recorded cases included:

1. Ethnically charged framing of routine law enforcement actions.
2. Messaging that portrayed specific ethnic groups as collective threats.
3. Narratives that implicitly justified retaliatory violence.

While not numerically dominant, identity-based offences remain among the highest-risk categories tracked by EOTS due to their historical role in triggering broader electoral violence when left unaddressed.

## Security Force Intimidation and Protest Suppression (3 incidents)

December also recorded 3 incidents involving alleged intimidation or excessive force by security agencies in politically sensitive contexts. These incidents included:

1. The use of tear gas against protesters with legitimate economic grievances.
2. Physical brutality captured on video and widely circulated.
3. Security actions perceived as punitive rather than protective.

Such incidents erode public trust in state neutrality and reinforce perceptions of selective enforcement. When security forces are viewed as partisan or coercive actors, even non-electoral protests can quickly acquire electoral significance.

## 6.3 Key Case Analysis

Given the nature and distribution of incidents recorded in December 2025, this section adopts a targeted case-study approach focusing on incidents with high escalation potential, institutional risk, or normative significance. These cases are assessed as early warning signals rather than isolated events.

### Verified Incident (Reference: EOTS #0123): Disruption of PDP Primary Process in Osun State<sup>[56]</sup>

Event	The Speaker of the Osun State House of Assembly, alongside other lawmakers, stormed the venue of a People's Democratic Party (PDP) primary, leading to clashes and disrupting the process. Reports indicated confrontations involving party actors and electoral officials.
Perpetrators & Targets	Political elites and party affiliates were the primary actors. The target was the PDP's internal democratic process and the broader principle of peaceful political competition.
Impact	This incident reflects the erosion of internal party dispute-resolution mechanisms and signals a readiness by political elites to use force or intimidation to influence candidate selection. Such conduct increases the likelihood of factional violence spilling into the general electoral environment.
Enforcement Gaps	No publicly reported sanctions or internal disciplinary actions followed the incident, reinforcing perceptions of elite impunity.

*Data source: ESI-Hub 2025*

<sup>[56]</sup> Vanguard. (2025, December 2). Osun Speaker, lawmakers storm PDP primary venue. Vanguard News. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/12/osun-speaker-lawmakers-storm-pdp-primary-venue/>

## Verified Incident (Reference: EOTS #0124): Verbal Threats Between Senior Political Actors in Edo State<sup>[57]</sup>

Event	Public statements by Governor Godwin Obaseki alleged threats of violence from a political rival, accompanied by counter-threats of retaliation.
Perpetrators & Targets	Senior political actors were both perpetrators and targets. The broader public sphere and political stability were indirectly affected.
Impact	Such rhetoric normalises violence as an acceptable political response and sets a dangerous precedent for supporters and affiliated groups. Elite signalling of this nature often precedes physical confrontation at lower levels.
Enforcement Gaps	No mediation, investigation, or formal censure was publicly reported.

*Data source: ESI-Hub 2025*

## Verified Incident (Reference: EOTS #0125): Ethnic Incitement Through Recycled Video Content<sup>[58]</sup>

Event	An X (formerly Twitter) user circulated a video falsely presented as evidence of targeted attacks against Northerners in Southern Nigeria. The footage was later identified as a past market demolition unrelated to the claims.
Perpetrators & Targets	Online influencers acted as amplifiers. Ethnic communities and national cohesion were the targets.
Impact	The incident exemplifies how recycled content is weaponised to inflame ethnic tensions and justify potential reprisals, posing a significant escalation risk.
Enforcement Gaps	No platform sanctions or legal accountability were reported.

*Data source: ESI-Hub 2025*

## Verified Incident (Reference: EOTS #0126): Police Suppression of Contractors' Protest in Abuja<sup>[59]</sup>

Event	Police deployed tear gas against contractors protesting unpaid government debts linked to FCT projects.
Perpetrators & Targets	Security forces were the primary actors. Protesters and civilians were the targets.
Impact	The incident highlights the securitisation of civic grievance spaces and contributes to perceptions of state hostility toward lawful protest, increasing the political sensitivity of non-electoral demonstrations.
Enforcement Gaps	No public review or accountability measures were disclosed.

*Data source: ESI-Hub 2025*

<sup>[57]</sup> Akpan, S. (2025, December 1). Obaseki: Okpebholo threatening me with violence — I'll fight back. TheCable. <https://www.thecable.ng/obaseki-okpebholo-threatening-me-with-violence-ill-fight-back/>

<sup>[58]</sup> Minikothe3rd. (@Minikothe3rd). (2025, December 7). All the provocations against the Northerners down South is being ignored by mainstream media and influencers. I hope they maintain. [Video]. [Post]. X. <https://x.com/Minikothe3rd/status/1997617026555347085>

<sup>[59]</sup> The Trumpet. (2025, December 2). Police tear gassed contractors protesting Wike's non-payment of ₦5.2bn debts. <https://thetrumpet.ng/police-tear-gassed-contractors-protesting-wikes-non-payment-of-%E2%82%A65-2bn-debts/>

## Verified Incident (Reference: EOTS #0130): Fatal Political Clash at State Function in Benue State<sup>[60]</sup>

Event	A political clash during a TIV Day celebration reportedly resulted in the stabbing death of a political aide, following confrontations between rival political camps.
Perpetrators & Targets	Political thugs and followers were involved. Political actors and public safety were the targets.
Impact	This incident represents one of the most severe escalations recorded in December and demonstrates how political rivalries can rapidly turn lethal, even during cultural or civic events.
Enforcement Gaps	While arrests were reported, broader accountability for political sponsors was not evident.

*Data source: ESI-Hub 2025*

## Verified Incident (Reference: EOTS #0133): Targeted Attack on Politically Connected Individual in Edo State<sup>[61]</sup>

Event	The cousin of Governor Obaseki and Managing Director of DAAR Communications was attacked and allegedly abducted in Benin City following politically sensitive comments.
Perpetrators & Targets	Suspected political thugs were the perpetrators. A politically connected individual was the target.
Impact	The incident reinforces the use of violence as retaliation for political expression and raises concerns about shrinking civic and media freedom ahead of elections.
Enforcement Gaps	Investigations were reportedly ongoing, but no outcomes had been publicly disclosed at the time of reporting.

*Data source: ESI-Hub 2025*

## 7. KEY DRIVER ANALYSIS & EMERGING DYNAMICS

Nigeria's security environment in December 2025 reflects the interplay of deep-rooted structural vulnerabilities, immediate triggers, and cross-cutting dynamics. This section moves beyond incident-level description to examine the underlying forces driving instability, with particular attention to their implications for the approaching 2027 electoral cycle.

<sup>[60]</sup> General Snow [@GeneralSnow\_]. (2025, December 15). Political clash at TIV day celebration in Gboko. Persons reportedly stabbed, An Aide To Governor Hyacinth Aliah Of Benue State [Video] [Post]. X. <https://x.com/GeneralSnow/status/2000506176321343579>

<sup>[61]</sup> Adeduyite, O. (2025, December 28). Don Pedro Obaseki narrates ordeal after alleged abduction in Benin. Daily Post Nigeria. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/12/28/don-pedro-obaseki-narrates-ordeal-after-alleged-abduction-in-benin/>

## 7.1 Structural Drivers

### 7.1.1 Governance and Security Deficits

#### The Capacity-Legitimacy Gap

A fundamental driver of persistent insecurity is the widening gap between state authority and citizen expectations. In numerous conflict-affected areas, the state's capacity to protect lives and property remains demonstrably inadequate, creating permissive environments where non-state armed groups establish parallel authority structures.

The December 2025 incident data reveal multiple instances where security responses were delayed or ineffective. In Lafia LGA, Nasarawa State, gunmen attacked the Kunza Ashigye community, killing three people. Local sources linked the violence to a lingering crisis between Fulani herdsmen and the host community, with one resident noting the attack occurred "around 10 p.m." without reported security intervention until after the fact<sup>[62]</sup>. Similarly, in Edo State, while police eventually arrested 27 suspected cultists at Urohi village, the raid occurred only after an initiation ceremony was already underway, and one suspect was "neutralised in the ensuing exchange" after opening fire.<sup>[63]</sup> When citizens repeatedly witness the state's reactive rather than preventive posture, trust in institutions erodes, and communities increasingly turn to self-help mechanisms or accommodation with armed actors.

The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) noted in December that Nigeria's security forces' capacity is constrained partly due to the "limited use of technology for operational planning, surveillance, and reconnaissance." The organisation stated that ongoing challenges are evident in the "repeated failure of security services to detect, disrupt or prevent attacks," even when fighters travel many kilometres on motorcycles, largely due to limited intelligence and surveillance capacity.<sup>[64]</sup>

#### Culture of Impunity

Across multiple incident categories, a troubling pattern emerges: perpetrators of violence rarely face meaningful accountability. In the Nasarawa attack, while the police commissioner ordered a "comprehensive investigation" and deployed tactical teams, community members expressed concern that residents—particularly women, children and the elderly—now "live in fear" . In Edo, though arrests were made, cult-related killings in Ikorodu, Lagos, and Benin City proceeded without rapid containment, reinforcing perceptions of state impotence.

This impunity has corrosive effects. It signals to potential offenders that violence carries minimal personal cost, deepens citizen disillusionment with formal justice systems, and incentivises armed groups to expand operations. The ISS report emphasised that addressing these deficiencies requires "massive investment in strengthening the intelligence and technological capacities of the police and military," as well as rebuilding "relations with communities in affected areas" to enhance human intelligence.

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<sup>[62]</sup> Daily Trust. (2024, February 24). 3 killed as gunmen attack Nasarawa community. <https://dailytrust.com/3-killed-as-gunmen-attack-nasarawa-community/?noamp=available>

<sup>[63]</sup> Nigeria Info FM. (2024, February 22). Edo police arrest 27 suspected cultists after raid at Urohi village. <https://www.nigeriainfo.fm/port-harcourt/news/national/edo-police-arrest-27-suspected-cultists-after-raid-at-urohi-village/>

<sup>[64]</sup> AllAfrica. (2025, December 5). Nigeria: Beyond declaring emergency, Tinubu must strengthen intelligence, tech capacities - Report. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202512050347.html>

## 7.1.2 Economic Exclusion and Livelihood Pressures

### The Kidnapping Economy

December recorded sustained kidnapping activity across multiple states, reflecting the entrenchment of kidnapping as a sophisticated, profitable enterprise. On December 26, police announced the arrest of two notorious kidnapping kingpins, Abubakar Usman (alias Siddi), 26, and Shehu Mohamadu (alias Gide), whose operations spanned Zamfara, Katsina, Niger, and Kwara States. The suspects were intercepted along the Komen–Masallaci axis in Kaiama LGA, Kwara State, with police recovering "an AK-47 rifle loaded with 20 rounds of live ammunition and ₦500,000 in cash, which the authorities identified as unspent ransom money." A brand-new Honda Ace 125 motorcycle valued at ₦1,850,000 was also seized, with investigations revealing it was "purchased with proceeds of ransom payments".<sup>[65]</sup>

One suspect, Abubakar Usman, had recently been identified in a viral social media video "seen flaunting illegal firearms and large sums of cash," illustrating how criminal networks use social media for status signalling and recruitment. Police further revealed that "the gang also doubles as suppliers of arms and ammunition to criminal elements," demonstrating the interconnected nature of criminal economies<sup>[66]</sup>.

The geography of kidnapping in December—spanning multiple northern and southern states—demonstrates that this is not a localised phenomenon but a nationwide criminal industry serving multiple functions: revenue generation, territorial signalling, and intimidation of influential individuals.

### Resource Competition and Communal Conflict

The December data reveal persistent violence linked to competition over dwindling natural resources. In Nasarawa State, the December 30 attack on Kunza community was directly linked by multiple sources to "a lingering crisis between Fulani herdsmen and the host community, which reportedly led to killings on both sides last year." The attack was reportedly triggered by an incident the previous Sunday when "two Fulani herdsmen were allegedly ambushed near a bridge close to the Akunza–Ashigye community, with one of them reportedly killed".

This pattern illustrates how resource competition escalates into retaliatory cycles. The President of the Migili Youth Association described the incident as "barbaric and reprehensible." At the same time, the Nasarawa State Chairman of MACBAN denied Fulani involvement but acknowledged that "three Fulani were attacked on a market day, with one killed". The conflicting accounts themselves reflect the deep mistrust between communities.

### Electoral Implications:

Economic desperation creates a vast pool of individuals vulnerable to political manipulation. Notably, in December, the House of Representatives approved amendments to the Electoral Act introducing "stiffer penalties for vote buying and selling, including a minimum of two years' imprisonment or a N5 million fine, or both, alongside a 10-year ban from contesting elections". However, lawmakers controversially rejected a clause seeking to "criminalise vote-buying during party primaries," which had proposed that any person who financially induces a delegate be "sentenced to two years' imprisonment without an option of fine". This selective approach to criminalising inducement suggests political actors recognise how economic desperation can be leveraged during nomination processes.

<sup>[65]</sup> Punch Newspaper. (2025, December 26). Police arrest bandit seen flaunting firearms in viral video, recover AK-47, cash. <https://punchng.com/just-in-police-arrest-bandit-seen-flaunting-firearms-in-viral-video-recover-ak-47-cash/>

<sup>[66]</sup> <https://www.channelstv.com/2025/12/26/police-arrest-suspected-bandit-flaunting-money-in-viral-video-recover-firearms-in-kwara/>

### 7.1.3 Communal Polarisation and Identity Politics

#### The Weaponisation of Identity

Nigeria's conflicts are rarely purely economic or political; they are almost always refracted through the prism of identity. What begins as competition over grazing land or market access is rapidly framed as an attack on a community, an ethnic group, or a faith.

The Nasarawa attack illustrates this dynamic. While the Migili Youth Association condemned the violence, MACBAN's chairman alleged that "some ethnic groups in the area blocked roads and targeted Fulani individuals, accusing them of involvement in the violence". Each community frames the conflict through its own identity lens, making de-escalation extraordinarily difficult.

#### Transnational Dimensions

December also revealed how identity-based conflict intersects with transnational threats. On December 26, the Federal Government announced it had conducted "precision strike operations against two major Islamic State (ISIS) terrorist enclaves located within the Bauni forest axis of Tangaza Local Government Area, Sokoto State." Intelligence confirmed these locations were being used as "assembly and staging grounds by foreign ISIS elements infiltrating Nigeria from the Sahel region, in collaboration with local affiliates".

The operation, executed between "00:12 hours and 01:30 hours" following presidential approval, involved "16 GPS-guided precision munitions deployed using MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aerial platforms" launched "from maritime platforms domiciled in the Gulf of Guinea". This rare disclosure of coordinated US-Nigerian counterterrorism operations underscores how local identity conflicts can become entangled with transnational extremist networks.

#### Electoral Implications:

Identity-based polarisation represents perhaps the most potent electoral risk factor. Political actors have repeatedly demonstrated a willingness to exploit ethnic and religious fault lines for electoral gain. In Plateau, Benue, and Southern Kaduna, where communal violence persists, the potential for such politicisation remains acute.

## 7.2 Cross-Cutting Themes

### 7.2.1 Transnational Crime Networks

December's arrests in Kwara State revealed the increasingly transnational nature of criminal networks. The arrested kingpins operated across four states—Zamfara, Katsina, Niger, and Kwara—demonstrating mobility that transcends administrative boundaries. More significantly, their role as "suppliers of arms and ammunition to criminal elements" suggests connections to regional arms trafficking networks.

### 7.2.2 Technology and Information Warfare

The viral video of Abubakar Usman "flaunting firearms and large sums of money on social media" illustrates how digital platforms serve multiple functions for criminal networks: recruitment, status signalling, and intimidation. Conversely, law enforcement increasingly uses digital evidence for tracking and apprehension, as the identification of Usman through social media demonstrates.

### 7.3 The Electoralization of Insecurity: Connecting December 2025 to the 2027 Election Cycle

December 2025 data must be read as a pre-election baseline—revealing the security environment that will shape and be shaped by political competition. Several connections between current dynamics and future electoral risks are evident:

December 2025 Dynamic	Projected Electoral Impact
<b>Persistent kidnapping (101 victims)</b>	Voter suppression in affected LGAs; campaign mobility constraints; intimidation of candidates and officials.
<b>Cult-related violence (Lagos, Ogun, Edo, Rivers, Delta)</b>	Mobilisation of cult groups as political thugs; election-day violence; ballot interference.
<b>Intra-party conflicts (5 incidents)</b>	Primary violence; factional defections; litigated candidacies.
<b>Political intimidation &amp; thuggery (4 incidents)</b>	Coercion of voters and opponents; shrinking civic space.
<b>Communal violence (Plateau, Benue, Taraba)</b>	Politicisation of identity; mobilisation along ethnic lines; post-election disputes.
<b>Highway insecurity (Ogun, Kogi, Edo)</b>	Disruption of electoral logistics; delayed material deployment.
<b>Security force incidents (3)</b>	Erosion of trust in state neutrality; perceptions of partisan enforcement.
<b>Disinformation &amp; ethnic incitement (6 incidents)</b>	Narrative warfare; identity-based mobilisation; delegitimisation of outcomes.

The convergence of these dynamics suggests that the 2027 electoral cycle will unfold in an environment already shaped by organised criminality, communal polarisation, and early political contestation. Without targeted intervention, these pre-existing patterns will likely intensify as election day approaches.

## 8. RISK ASSESSMENT & SCENARIO PLANNING

This section synthesises verified December 2025 incident data, casualty patterns, and structural drivers to assess near-term security risks and electoral vulnerabilities. Using the Flashpoint Severity Index (FSI), the analysis maps current hotspots, classifies state-level risk, and outlines plausible scenarios for the next 1–3 months as Nigeria transitions into the 2026 pre-election phase. The assessment is designed to support early logistical planning, preventive deployment, and scenario-based decision-making.

### 8.1 Flashpoint Severity Index (FSI) – December 2025 Assessment

The FSI classifies states into High, Moderate, and Low-risk categories, based on a weighted algorithm incorporating:

- Incident frequency (30%)
- Casualty severity (40%)
- Strategic impact (e.g., attacks on security institutions, transport corridors, political actors) (20%)
- Electoral relevance and population exposure (10%)

#### HIGH-RISK STATES

##### Cluster 2 – “The Crimson Zone”

##### Plateau State (FSI Score: 0.8755)

**Justification:** Plateau emerged as the most severe flashpoint in December 2025, combining high incident frequency (10 incidents) with elevated casualty levels (42 casualties).

**Indicators:** Persistent communal and ethno-religious violence in Jos South and Barkin Ladi LGAs; entrenched reprisal cycles; high risk of election-period escalation through mobilised identity-based conflict.

##### Borno State (FSI Score: 0.8400)

**Justification:** Although overall incident numbers were lower (6 incidents), the lethality rate was extreme, with 53 casualties, indicating continued insurgency-related risk.

**Indicators:** Sporadic but high-impact attacks; continued threat to electoral infrastructure and personnel in vulnerable LGAs.

##### Zamfara State (FSI Score: 0.8234)

**Justification:** Zamfara remained a core insecurity hub, with 7 incidents and 48 casualties, driven primarily by banditry and kidnapping.

**Indicators:** Rural governance vacuum; armed group dominance in Maru and Tsafe LGAs; high exposure to mass abduction and voter suppression risks.

#### MODERATE-RISK STATES

##### Cluster 1 – “The Pressure Belt”

States in this cluster exhibit either elevated lethality or sustained incident frequency, but not at the scale observed in the Crimson Zone.

- Imo (FSI: 0.5804): Recurrent armed attacks and criminal-political violence with urban concentration.
- Nasarawa, Jigawa, Taraba (FSI: 0.44–0.43): Localised but lethal incidents linked to communal tensions and armed assaults.
- Edo and Anambra (FSI: 0.4158): Cult-related violence and targeted attacks in urban and peri-urban areas.
- Kaduna (FSI: 0.3298): Moderate frequency but strategic importance due to transport corridors and history of mass kidnapping.
- Lagos, Yobe, Benue, Kwara: Mixed profiles combining criminal violence, political thuggery indicators, or sporadic armed incidents.

**Interpretation:** These states face escalation risk, particularly if political mobilisation overlays existing criminal or communal tensions.

## LOW-RISK STATES

### Cluster 0 – “The Watch List”

States classified as low risk recorded isolated incidents or low casualty intensity in December 2025. These include Enugu, Rivers, Ogun, Niger, Ondo, Kogi, Katsina, Delta, Oyo, Osun, FCT, Kano, and others.

#### Caveat:

“**Low Risk**” does not mean “**No Risk.**” Several of these states—particularly Rivers, Kano, and Lagos—display early indicators of political thuggery, cult mobilisation, or targeted intimidation, which historically escalate rapidly during campaign peaks.

## 8.2 Forward-Looking Scenarios (Next 1–3 Months)

### Baseline Scenario – Gradual Escalation

**Probability: 55%**

#### Description:

Current December patterns persist into early 2026. High-risk states (Plateau, Zamfara, Borno) remain unstable, while moderate-risk states experience incremental escalation driven by political mobilisation, criminal opportunism, and unresolved communal disputes.

#### Electoral Impact:

- Uneven voter participation, particularly in rural LGAs of Plateau and Zamfara.
- Rising security costs for voter registration, logistics, and early campaign activities.
- Increased reliance on security-led crowd and movement control.

### Deterioration Scenario – Politicisation of Violence

**Probability: 30%**

#### Triggers:

- Targeted attacks on political actors or party offices
- Kidnapping of electoral officials or ad-hoc staff
- Escalation of cult or gang violence aligned with political competition

## Description:

Violence shifts from diffuse criminality to direct interference with democratic processes, particularly in moderate-risk urban states and rural high-risk LGAs.

## Electoral Impact:

- Postponement or suspension of electoral activities in select LGAs
- Mass withdrawal of ad-hoc staff
- Legal and legitimacy challenges to electoral outcomes

## Improvement Scenario – Containment and Stabilisation Probability: 15%

### Triggers:

- Targeted security operations in high-FSI states
- Effective community mediation in Plateau and Taraba
- Early enforcement against political thuggery networks

## Description:

Security agencies regain partial control of flashpoints, reducing casualty severity even if incidents persist.

## Electoral Impact:

- Improved logistics planning
- Restored confidence in selected corridors and urban centres
- Reduced likelihood of large-scale disenfranchisement

## Electoral Risk Implications

- **Voter Turnout:** Severely depressed turnout is projected in high-FSI LGAs in Plateau, Zamfara, and parts of Borno. Moderate-risk states face turnout volatility dependent on election-day security posture.
- **INEC Logistics:** High exposure along insecure transport routes; RACs and Super RACs in flashpoint LGAs remain vulnerable.
- **Ad-hoc Staff Safety:** Elevated risk of staff withdrawal due to kidnapping and intimidation fears.
- **Candidate & Observer Safety:** High risk in states with cultism and political gang indicators (Imo, Rivers, Lagos).
- **Legitimacy Risks:** The convergence of violence, logistical disruption, and uneven participation increases the probability of post-election disputes and unrest.

## 9. STAKEHOLDER-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are informed by the incident analysis, identified threat patterns, and observed drivers of conflict in December 2025. They are designed to be actionable and targeted, aiming to mitigate risks and strengthen the foundation for peaceful electoral processes as Nigeria moves into the 2026 pre-election period.

### 9.1. For the National Peace Committee (NPC):

Security agencies regain partial control of flashpoints, reducing casualty severity even if incidents persist.

i

**Initiate Preventive Dialogues in Zones with Converging Threats:** Leverage its convening authority to facilitate state-level peace engagements in areas where December's data shows a convergence of risks. Priority should be given to:

- **North Central (Plateau, Benue):** To address the layering of communal tensions, farmer-herder conflict, and the potential for political exploitation of identity-based grievances.
- **South West (Lagos, Ogun):** To engage political stakeholders and community leaders on the risks of cult-related violence being mobilised for political purposes in urban centres.
- **South East (Imo, Anambra):** To address the simmering tensions involving criminal gangs and targeted violence, which could disrupt political activities and public order.

ii

**Engage Security Agencies on Civilian Protection During Festive and Campaign Periods:** Drawing on the December experience of heightened risk around public gatherings, the NPC should engage with the Inspector-General of Police and service chiefs to advocate for proactive, intelligence-led deployments focused on protecting civilian mobility and public space rather than reactive, heavy-handed responses.

iii

**Strengthen the Capacity of ISPAs for Sub-National Early Warning:** Task the Independent State Peace Architectures (ISPAs) with specifically monitoring and reporting on localised threats that could be instrumentalised during political mobilisation. This includes tracking tensions in rural corridors prone to kidnapping (as seen in Kaduna, Zamfara) and communal flashpoints in LGAs like Bokokos and Barkin Ladi, enabling more granular preventive action.

## 9.2. For Civil Society Organisations (CSOs):

i

**Deepen Monitoring of 'Everyday' Violence with Electoral Implications:** CSOs should expand monitoring frameworks to capture not just overt political violence, but also the 'everyday' threats documented in December—such as cult clashes in the South South, highway kidnapping in the South West, and communal skirmishes in the North Central. These patterns erode the civic space and social trust necessary for credible elections.

ii

**Advocate for Victim-Centred Security and Justice:** CSOs should use the December data on domestic and gender-based violence, as well as underreported casualty figures, to advocate with state governments and security agencies for improved victim support services, accessible reporting mechanisms, and timely investigative responses to all forms of violence.

iii

**Strengthen Fact-Checking of Ethno-Religious Narratives:** Partners should intensify collaborative fact-checking initiatives focused on debunking disinformation that weaponises identity. The December case of recycled video content framed to incite ethnic tensions underscores the need for rapid-response mechanisms to counter such narratives before they escalate.

iv

**Amplify the Plight of Communities Affected by Banditry and Kidnapping:** CSOs should work with media partners to ensure consistent, ethical reporting on the humanitarian and security challenges faced by rural communities in banditry hotspots (North West, North Central). Sustained visibility is crucial to prevent the silent disenfranchisement of these populations and to hold relevant authorities accountable for their protection.

## 9.3. For Media Organisations:

i

**Exercise Caution in Reporting Communal and Identity-Based Conflicts:** Media houses should adopt conflict-sensitive reporting frameworks, particularly when covering incidents in Plateau, Benue, and Taraba. This involves verifying casualty figures from multiple sources, avoiding inflammatory or biased language, and providing context that discourages reprisal cycles.

ii

**Provide Nuanced Reporting on Crime and Security:** Journalists should avoid framing all incidents of banditry or kidnapping solely through a sensationalist lens. Deeper reporting on the socio-economic drivers of these crimes, as well as the impact on vulnerable communities, can foster a more informed public discourse and pressure policymakers to address root causes.

iii

**Amplify Verified Information on Electoral Preparedness:** Media partners should proactively disseminate accurate, timely information about voter registration, INEC logistics, and security arrangements, countering rumours and misinformation that could undermine public confidence in the process.

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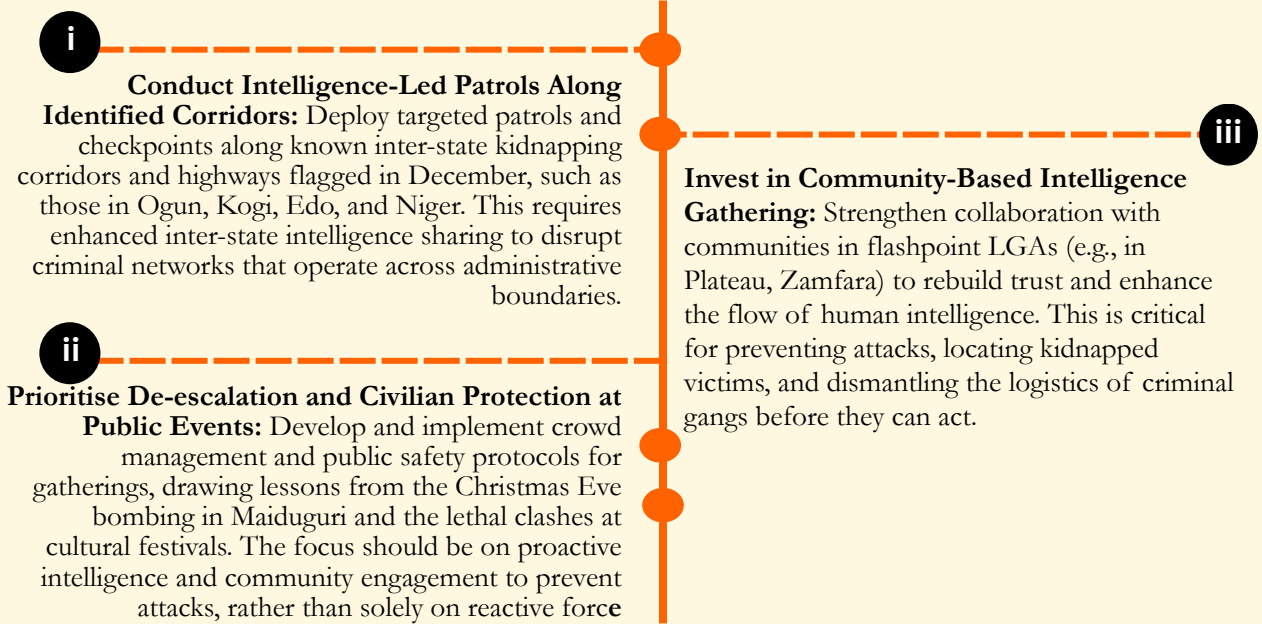
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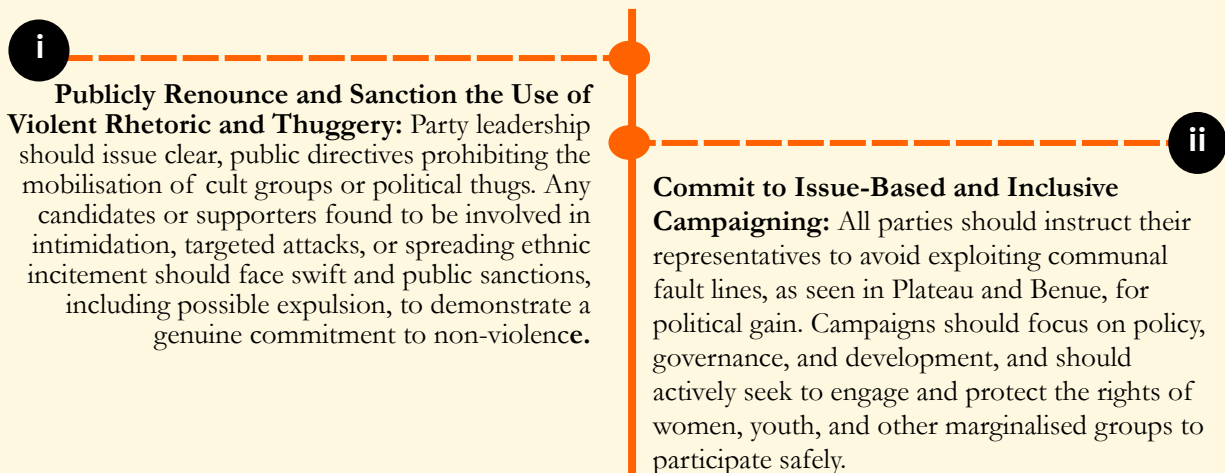
#### 9.4. For Security Agencies (NPF, DSS, Military):



#### 9.5. For INEC:



#### 9.6. For Political Parties and Candidates:



## 9.7. For Traditional and Religious Institutions:

i

**Activate Local Mediation in Persistent Communal Flashpoints:** Leverage moral authority and deep local knowledge to convene trust-building dialogues between conflicting groups in areas with a history of communal violence, such as Plateau, Benue, and Taraba. Mediation efforts should focus on de-escalating immediate tensions and addressing underlying grievances.

ii

**Use Platforms to Reject Violence and Promote Civic Duty:** Religious and traditional leaders should consistently use their platforms to condemn all forms of violence, including kidnapping, cultism, and domestic abuse. They should also actively encourage their communities to participate peacefully in the electoral process, framing it as a civic and moral duty.

## 9.8. For Development and International Partners:

i

**Provide Flexible Support for Localised Peace Infrastructure:** Offer funding and technical assistance to strengthen the capacities of state and community-level peace architectures (e.g., ISPA, local mediation committees) for early response. December's data confirms that threats are highly localised, requiring support that can be deployed flexibly at the sub-national level.

ii

**Support Initiatives Addressing the 'Kidnapping Economy':** Partner with Nigerian institutions and CSOs to support research and programming that addresses the structural drivers of the kidnapping economy, including economic exclusion and weak rule of law in affected regions. This could include support for livelihood programmes and strengthening criminal justice responses.

iii

**Maintain Discreet but Consistent Diplomatic Engagement:** Engage with political leaders to underscore the importance of non-violence, adherence to the Peace Accord, and respect for constitutional processes. Publicly, partners should continue to express confidence in Nigerian institutions while consistently condemning all forms of electoral and political violence.

## 10. CONCLUSION

The security and electoral landscape of Nigeria in January 2026 reveals a nation at a critical juncture. The data and analysis presented in this report underscore a volatile and increasingly complex threat environment, characterized by a sharp polarization of violence: mass abductions in the Northwest and high-lethality attacks in the NoDecember 2025 ended with a complex security landscape characterized by organised crime, communal tensions, and social disorder across multiple regions. The 118 verified incidents resulted in 151 deaths, 117 injuries, and 101 kidnappings, highlighting a diffuse instability ahead of elections. Violence peaked during festive periods when civilian movement increased and security presence reduced. Armed groups showed adaptability by targeting highways, religious spaces, and rural areas, indicating potential threats to future electoral activities. The 12 electoral incidents revealed troubling trends, including intra-party conflicts, political intimidation, ethnic incitement, and disinformation. Persistent issues such as governance deficits, economic exclusion, and communal polarisation continue to be drivers of instability, particularly in Plateau, Zamfara, and Borno. This environment threatens voter turnout and electoral logistics, while urban areas in the South are at risk of exploitation by cults and criminal gangs. This analysis serves as a call for proactive measures. Security agencies should enhance intelligence-led patrols in vulnerable areas, while the National Peace Committee can engage local structures to mitigate tensions. Civil society, media, and international partners should monitor low-level threats and support preventive initiatives. The response of Nigeria's governance and peacebuilding stakeholders will be crucial in determining whether the situation stabilises or worsens leading up to the elections.